

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,  
In thy most need to go by thy side. •

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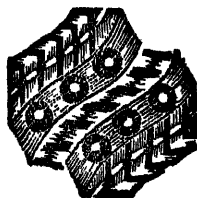
CLASSICAL

FIVE DIALOGUES OF PLATO  
INTRODUCTION BY A. D. LINDSAY

PLATO, born at Athens or Ægina in 427 B.C.  
Met Socrates at the age of nineteen and  
became his pupil in 409 B.C. Visited  
Euclid at Megara and travelled to Egypt and  
Sicily. On his return to Athens in 386 B.C.  
he formed an academy. He remained in  
Athens until his death in 347 B.C.



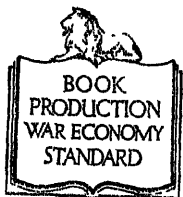
# FIVE DIALOGUES



PLATO

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## INTRODUCTION

PLATO wrote no systematic treatise on philosophy, not because he was not a systematic thinker: all his writings are expressions of a single outlook on reality, a system which though it may perhaps show signs of development, yet always preserves its unity: but he expounded it in a series of dialogues each of which stands by itself complete. In each some separate aspect of life or reality, some separate problem for thought to unravel is the starting-point and centre of the discussion. Only the solutions have a common unity: for all these various problems when discussed lead the inquiry back to a conception of the relation between sense and thought which is the centre of Plato's philosophy. The five dialogues in this volume, however, have been brought together because they all throw some light on a special side of Plato's teaching, his doctrine of the place and importance of intuition or inspiration, however we describe that immediate element in thought which can be distinguished from that other element which is teachable and reducible to rules. In each of these dialogues, though for different purposes and from different points of view, Plato expounds that part of his system which has attracted the attention and admiration of great poets and lovers of poetry, and which when developed by later thinkers who lacked Plato's devotion to exact logical thinking and his interest in science, proved the source of much later mysticism. As Plato wrote no systematic treatise on philosophy, so he wrote no æsthetic. But these dialogues present the materials for a Platonic æsthetic, or rather for an æsthetic in accordance with the general principles of Platonic Philosophy, but which Plato himself would probably have disowned. For we must not forget that if of all philosophers Plato has proved pre-eminently the philosopher of the poet and the mystic, if his system has seemed to lovers of poetry to furnish an explanation

of the mysterious insight of the artist into reality, he was also, the philosopher who proclaimed most insistently the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry, and in pursuance of that quarrel argued that art was an imitation of an imitation, three times removed from truth. While other philosophers have regarded art as an important activity of the human mind, to be studied like other activities dispassionately and impartially, Plato rarely refers expressly to art without denouncing it as a sham and a deception. The explanation of this paradox is not far to seek. Plato denounces art because he so intensely felt its power. He was himself both poet and philosopher, and the quarrel between poetry and philosophy was waged in his own breast. He could not afford to pay art the doubtful compliment of calling it an excellent purgative of fear and pity or a useful occupation for leisure time; he could not regard it as a necessary stage on the way to that full enlightenment which is philosophy. He knew that the claims of art were too imperious for it to submit to be consigned to a position of decent respectability. He felt that it claimed all or nothing. He would not give it all: for he could not be unfaithful to philosophy: so he must needs fiercely give it nothing.

What, then, are we to think of these dialogues, and especially of the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus*, which seem so obviously to be devoted to the praise of inspiration and to breathe the spirit expressed in—

the Poets, . . .

. . . men endowed with highest gifts,  
The vision and the faculty divine?

They may be and are often regarded as the faith of Plato the poet in contrast with Plato the philosopher, as victories won by poetry in the quarrel with philosophy, which was to end in the denunciation of poetry in *Republic*, Book X, and the close, logical reasoning of the Parmenides and the Philebus, where the enthusiasm for beauty seems to have yielded entirely to the enthusiasm for science. Those who deplore the issue of the struggle, welcome the *Symposium* and the *Phædrus* as the achievements of the real Plato, the poet, won before the supposed coldness of old age had extinguished the glow of inspiration in him; those who rejoice in

it, view them as youthful aberrations to be condoned but regretted.

An attentive reading of the dialogues, however, forces us to modify these views. It is not the case that Plato here makes statements about poetry which are inconsistent with his statements in other dialogues. Even in the myth in the *Phædrus*, where Plato classifies souls as having seen more or less of truth, he puts the soul of the poet or imitator low down.

Nor, again, is it possible to divide Plato's system into poetical and non-poetical elements, and say that in these dialogues he emphasizes the more poetical as in other dialogues the more logical elements of his system. For what has always been regarded as the most poetic element in Plato—his theory of ideas—is his most important logical doctrine, and these dialogues, and in them many of the passages which seem most to glow with the enthusiasm of poetry, are of great importance to Plato's logical theory. The truth is that if Plato is poetic, it is not because he ever subordinates philosophy to poetry, but because he takes what may be called a poetic view of knowledge. He emphasizes and asserts the importance in knowledge and in logic of the element of the immediate and the intuitive. While always insisting on exact argument and careful logical reasoning, he makes all reasoning depend finally on intellectual insight and vision which is immediate. Hence if we are to construct from Plato any theory of the function of poetry higher than the low one which he expressly assigns to it, it must be by following him in his appreciation of the logical importance of immediate insight, and then by showing how poetry can in its way claim a share in that philosophical insight. The latter part of the argument will not be Plato's, yet it may be based upon Plato's description of beauty.

This impossibility of separation will become clear if we notice shortly the manner in which these various dialogues touch the question with which we are concerned. The *Ion* is a short dialogue, which presents us with the main outline of the problem. Ion the rhapsode is a great interpreter of Homer. He can sway a whole multitude of people by his recitations. He claims to understand all passages in Homer better than any other man; but, Socrates argues, under-

standing and interpretation of special passages needs special knowledge, the knowledge of the carpenter or the physician, which Ion does not possess. If he can interpret Homer thus, it is not through knowledge but through inspiration or madness. The rhapsodist, then, must be either dishonest or inspired. The subject of the *Symposium* is love. Socrates, when it comes to his turn to speak, reports the speech of Diotima, a wise woman of Mantinea. The lover and the philosopher are put together: for love is the desire for immortality in beauty: and as the beauty of the mind is higher than the beauty of the body, so philosophy is higher than earthly love. The vision of true beauty, described in language appropriate to the mystic vision, is the last stage of a progress from particular sensible beauty to universal intellectual beauty, which includes in its higher stages the beauty of the sciences, and "many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom." In the *Meno* we start from the logical side. Meno and Socrates are seeking for a definition of virtue, when Meno raises the logical difficulty as to how such search is possible. How can you inquire into what you do not know? Socrates answers by referring to a truth which he has heard from priests and priestesses and from poets, "such as the poet Pindar and other inspired men." The truth is expressed in the doctrine of reminiscence, that "all inquiry and learning is but recollection." It is then proved by a logical analysis of what is involved in the apprehension of geometrical truth. In the beginning of the *Phædo* Socrates says that he has been constantly warned in dreams that he "should make and cultivate music," and that he had imagined "that this was only intended to exhort and encourage me in the study of philosophy, which has always been the pursuit of my life and is the noblest and best of music." The proof of the doctrine of immortality, the subject of the dialogue, involves another proof of the doctrine of reminiscence, which in philosophical language would be described as an argument that experience involves a priori elements which cannot be derived from experience. The dialogue proceeds with an exposition of the theory of ideas, which is a very important statement of the main doctrine of Plato's logic, and the final proof of immortality rests on the kinship of the soul with

the ideas. In contrast with the *Meno* and the *Phædo*, the *Phædrus* opens with a discussion bearing more nearly on the nature of poetry. The formal subject of the dialogue is the nature of rhetoric. It is illustrated by the famous speech in praise of the divine madness of the follower of the Muses, of the lover and of the philosopher, a myth in which the doctrine of reminiscence is introduced again and the vision described of true reality which all souls have experienced before birth. Philosophy is the recollection of that vision, and in that recollection beauty is made to play an especial part. Yet in the discussion on rhetoric which follows, the true rhetorician is described as having knowledge, and his knowledge as consisting in, not a recollection of previous vision, but the power of logical definition and division.

We shall study, therefore, the doctrine of immediacy, not discriminating between its poetical or philosophical importance. The relevant passage in the *Symposium* occurs in Socrates' account of the discourse of Diotima (pp. 220-222). She has explained how love is the desire for immortality in beauty, and how beauty of the soul is greater than beauty of the body. Then it is intimated that what is to follow is a more unusual and advanced revelation. The seeker after beauty, beginning with an appreciation of beautiful bodies, will consider that the beauty in one body is akin to that in another, and that therefore the beauty in all bodies is one and the same. Then as he goes on, he will learn the oneness of the beauty of the soul with the beauty of the sciences, until "he come to a single science of this beauty." That science will be known in this way. After contemplating beautiful objects gradually and in order, "*on a sudden* he beholds a beauty wonderful in its nature." The description of this beauty marks its difference from beautiful objects. It is eternal, unproduced, indestructible: it is not like other things partly beautiful and partly deformed. Neither is it, like the beauty of sensible objects, in any way relative: nor can it, like feet and hands, be seen: "It is eternally of itself and in itself the same in form."

In this description and in what follows these points are to be noticed. Apprehension of this one beauty follows on study of beautiful objects, but is distinct from that study.

The progress towards this one beauty begins with the reflection that beauty in one object must be the same as beauty in another. The search after it is the search for the unity in the many beautiful objects. The apprehension of it is called a sudden appearance; yet it is carefully described in a way which shows that *appearance* cannot be taken literally. Further, all other things are beautiful by participation in it. Compared with it their beauty is relative and comes into being and is destroyed. It has no part in the world of change, and hence in it the desire of the soul for immortality is satisfied. But when we would conclude from this that the lover of this real beauty must be like the poet who is able—

“ To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a Heaven in a wild flower;  
Hold Infinity in the palm of his hand,  
And Eternity in an hour ”—

we have to remember that eternity and changelessness for Plato belong only to all realities apprehended by thought and not by sense, and to them only, and that the progress towards them is intellectual.

His answer in the *Meno* (p. 91) to the difficulty that knowledge can neither be described as mere acquisition from without nor development from within, nor yet is it possible to discriminate without great difficulty the part played by external and internal, is that real knowledge is the eternal possession of the soul. What it knows it has always known. The office of the senses and the visible world is but to stir this forgotten knowledge into recollection. “Since the soul is immortal and has been born many times and has seen the things of this world and of Hades and all things, there is nothing which she has not learned. So that it is no wonder that she should be able to recollect virtue and all other things, seeing that she has learned them previously.” This is the glorious truth which Plato has learned from priests and priestesses and poets. But it is not accepted as a solution till it is proved by showing what is involved in the following geometrical reasoning by an untrained mind. Hence the doctrine does not mean what is confessed by Shelley when he says—



• "I knew

• That I had felt the freshness of that dawn,  
Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair,  
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn,

Under the selfsame bough, and heard as there  
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold  
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air."

For the other side of Plato's doctrine of reminiscence is the unlikeness and the difference between the visible things now seen and the intelligible realities of which they remind us. When Plato at the end of his *Meno* makes the distinction between knowledge and true opinion, instead of saying, as might be expected, that when a man thinks rightly without being able to explain the reasons for his belief, he is remembering what he has learnt before but not remembering it all, he says that reminiscence is only of knowledge, not of right opinion. We recollect the cause, and it is "the tie of cause" which transforms right opinion into knowledge. The *Phædo* emphasizes this distinction between the visible and the intelligible. The passage there (pp. 83-87) on the doctrine of reminiscence is much more explicit than that in the *Meno*. Socrates first observes that recollection always involves noticing "whether the reminding object in any way falls short in its resemblance to that which is recollected." He then gives as his example the equal. We are reminded of the equal by stones and sticks and other things; but the equal is "something different beside all these." For equal stones and sticks sometimes appear unequal, but equality is never inequality. And he argues that in using the predicate "equal" of visible things, we are judging them by a standard which cannot have been got from them, inasmuch as no visible things show more than an approximation to perfect equality. The notion of perfect equality itself, then, must be got elsewhere. We cannot get it without the senses, but "all the objects of the senses aim at real equality and fall short of it." Therefore before we begin to experience anything we must have a knowledge of the real equality. The argument is not confined to equality. It holds of "the real beauty and the real goodness and justice and holiness, and all those things which in the

process of asking and answering questions we seal with the title of 'the real'." Throughout the *Phædo*, as we have noticed, the argument asserts the kinship of the soul with these intelligible, changeless realities, the Platonic ideas. This kinship is the basis of Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul, but it also implies distinction between soul and body and distinction between the world of the senses and the world of thought. It is true that he often seems to describe apprehension of the ideas in terms borrowed from æsthetic experience. That was inevitable. For the apprehension of reality in philosophy, though immediate, is only reached at the end of a long process of reflection. No one who has not gone through such a process can have had experience of immediate intellectual apprehension, to such persons, therefore, Plato must describe it in forms of the only immediacy with which they are acquainted, that of æsthetic experience. Now the element of immediacy and intuition is so pre-eminent in art and so concealed in science, that when Plato asserts that all real knowledge is immediate, we easily think that he is saying that knowledge is to be found in art rather than in science. Nothing is further from his intention. It is true that he describes reality as vividly and immediately apprehended, but he is as eager to insist that we come to such immediate apprehension only by transcending the limitations of sense by the power of thought. Though the apprehension is immediate and its own evidence, it is reached in a definite way, which Plato is prepared to describe. This is intended in the expression "in the process of asking and answering questions" of the passage quoted above. That means what Plato calls the logical process of dialectic. Perhaps the clearest account of the matter is given in a passage in the seventh letter. Plato is explaining in a spirit akin to his words in the *Phædrus* (p. 284) why his philosophy cannot be properly stated in words. He shows the defects of all our ways of representing reality. Names, examples and definitions are all defective and may all lead to error. That does not mean that we must acquiesce in the imperfection of thinking, but that we must test and examine all our thought by dialectic. If we do that, he says, after a long and difficult process of "rubbing our conceptions and perceptions

together," suddenly insight and reason flash out, and we know reality as it is. The reality cannot be described, simply because our apprehension of it is immediate, but we can explain the necessary means towards that apprehension.

Plato quarrels with art because in his view it emphasizes and attaches importance to just that sensible side of things, which thought must transcend, and so hinders the mind's progress from sensible to intelligible reality, and also because the processes by which it reaches immediacy are not trustworthy and are as far as possible removed from those logical processes by which truth is attained. The tenth book of the *Republic* is mainly concerned with the first charge. In calling art imitation, Plato treats it as concerned with copying visible reality and that only. Some art is rightly liable to this charge, and the way in which some persons regard all art gives it added justification. At the beginning of the tenth book art is described as dangerous without the antidote of a right understanding of its function. As in the *Ion*, Plato is attacking art which claims to be a short cut to the knowledge possessed by science. In so far as the truth of art is taken to consist in the faithfulness of its representation of the sensible objects to which it refers, these criticisms are just. They seem one-sided because there is no examination of the claim which the artist would certainly make, namely, that art is not concerned with imitating the sensible, but, through the medium of the sensible, represents the eternal realities with which philosophy is concerned.

Plato, in so far as he is explicit on the subject, declares that the eternal realities are to be apprehended in one way only, by hard thinking, yet in what he says of beauty there are undoubtedly suggestions of some such theory of the function of art as the artist might put forward. For that we must turn to the *Phædrus*, remembering only that his attack on the deceptive nature of art is never an attack on beauty; throughout the criticism of Book X he never speaks of beauty at all.

The myth in the *Phædrus* is the second of two speeches on love. In the first speech Socrates attacks love in the name of reason and self-control. The second is a solemn recantation of this blasphemy. Love may be madness, but madness may be divine. A myth based on the doctrine of reminis-

exactly as I have related. But seeing that the soul is immortal, I think it is right that a man should venture to think that something of the kind is true of our souls and their mansions. The venture is a noble one; and a man should chant this tale to himself as a solemn incantation."

There is no room here to give an account of the great influence of Plato on English poetry. The *Symposium* and the *Phædrus* played a large part in it. But in considering the Platonism of Spenser and the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, we must remember that it came from Italy; that they read Plato with the help of Marsilio Ficino, as he read him with the help of Plotinus. Platonism of the *Renaissance* was largely a counterblast to Aristotelianism, and exaggerated emphasis was given to the differences between Plato and his disciple, little attention paid to their great general agreement. The result was a Plato devoid of logical theory, whose central doctrines are expressed in his myths. It would be absurd to deny the name of Platonist to Plotinus or Ficino, or to the Cambridge Platonists. Plato was their inspiration; but we shall understand the real Plato better, if, without denying the doctrines which they attribute to him, rather rejoicing in their power and inspiration, we remember that they must be understood in a sense compatible with Plato's devotion to mathematics and logical inquiry and his conviction that knowledge, however immediate and infallible, was only to be attained by hard and patient thinking.

A. D. LINDSAY.

NOTE.—The translation of the *Ion* in this volume is by Shelley, and was first published in 1840 in *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley, edited by Mrs. Shelley. The translation of the *Meno* is by Floyer Sydenham, first published in 1773. The translation of the *Phædo* is by Henry Cary, published in 1848, and the translation of the *Phædrus* by J. Wright, first published in 1848. That of the *Symposium* is by Michael Joyce, first published in 1935.

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# PLATO

## ION; OR, OF THE ILIAD

TRANSLATED FROM PLATO

SOCRATES and ION

*Socrates.* HAIL to thee, O Ion! from whence returnest St.  
thou amongst us now?—from thine own native I.  
Ephesus? p.

*Ion.* No, Socrates; I come from Epidaurus and the 530  
feasts in honour of Æsculapius.

*Socrates.* Had the Epidaurians instituted a contest of  
rhapsody in honour of the God?

*Ion.* And not in rhapsodies alone; there were contests  
in every species of music.

*Socrates.* And in which did you contend? And what  
was the success of your efforts?

*Ion.* I bore away the first prize at the games, O  
Socrates.

*Socrates.* Well done! You have now only to consider  
how you shall win the Panathenæa.

*Ion.* That may also happen, God willing.

*Socrates.* Your profession, O Ion, has often appeared  
to me an enviable one. For, together with the nicest  
care of your person, and the most studied elegance of  
dress, it imposes upon you the necessity of a familiar  
acquaintance with many and excellent poets, and  
especially with Homer, the most admirable of them all.  
Nor is it merely because you can repeat the verses of  
this great poet, that I envy you, but because you fathom  
his inmost thoughts. For he is no rhapsodist who does  
not understand the whole scope and intention of the  
poet, and is not capable of interpreting it to his audience.  
This he cannot do without a full comprehension of the  
meaning of the author he undertakes to illustrate; and  
worthy, indeed, of envy are those who can fulfil these  
conditions.

*Ion.* Thou speakest truth, O Socrates. And, indeed, I have expended my study particularly on this part of my profession. I flatter myself that no man living excels me in the interpretation of Homer; neither Metrodorus of Lampsacus, nor Stesimbrotus the Thasian, nor Glauco, nor any other rhapsodist of the present times can express so many various and beautiful thoughts upon Homer as I can.

*Socrates.* I am persuaded of your eminent skill, O Ion. You will not, I hope, refuse me a specimen of it?

*Ion.* And, indeed, it would be worth your while to hear me declaim upon Homer. I deserve a golden crown from his admirers.

*Socrates.* And I will find leisure some day or other to request you to favour me so far. At present, I will only trouble you with one question. Do you excel in explaining Homer alone, or are you conscious of a  
531 similar power with regard to Hesiod and Archilochus?

*Ion.* I possess this high degree of skill with regard to Homer alone, and I consider that sufficient.

*Socrates.* Are there any subjects upon which Homer and Hesiod say the same things?

*Ion.* Many, as it seems to me.

*Socrates.* Whether do you demonstrate these things better in Homer or Hesiod?

*Ion.* In the same manner, doubtless; inasmuch as they say the same words with regard to the same things.

*Socrates.* But with regard to those things in which they differ;—Homer and Hesiod both treat of divination, do they not?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* Do you think that you or a diviner would make the best exposition, respecting all that these poets say of divination, both as they agree and as they differ?

*Ion.* A diviner, probably.

*Socrates.* Suppose you were a diviner, do you not think that you could explain the discrepancies of those poets on the subject of your profession, if you understand their agreement?

*Ion.* Clearly so.

*Socrates.* How does it happen then that you are possessed of skill to illustrate Homer, and not Hesiod, or any other poet in an equal degree? Is the subject-matter of the poetry of Homer different from all other poets? Does he not principally treat of war and social intercourse, and of the distinct functions and characters of the brave man and the coward, the professional and private person, the mutual relations which subsist between the Gods and men; together with the modes of their intercourse, the phenomena of Heaven, the secrets of Hades, and the origin of Gods and heroes? Are not these the materials from which Homer wrought his poem?

*Ion.* Assuredly, O Socrates.

*Socrates.* And the other poets, do they not treat of the same matter?

*Ion.* Certainly; but not like Homer.

*Socrates.* How! Worse?

*Ion.* Oh! far worse.

*Socrates.* Then Homer treats of them better than they?

*Ion.* Oh! Jupiter!—how much better!

*Socrates.* Amongst a number of persons employed in solving a problem of arithmetic, might not a person know, my dear Ion, which had given the right answer?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* The same person who had been aware of the false one, or some other?

*Ion.* The same, clearly.

*Socrates.* That is, some one who understood arithmetic?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* Among a number of persons giving their opinions on the wholesomeness of different foods, whether would one person be capable to pronounce upon the rectitude of the opinions of those who judged rightly, and another on the erroneousness of those which were incorrect, or would the same person be competent to decide respecting them both?

*Ion.* The same, evidently.

*Socrates.* What would you call that person?

*Ion.* A physician.

*Socrates.* We may assert then, universally, that the same person who is competent to determine the truth, is competent also to determine the falsehood of whatever  
532 assertion is advanced on the same subject; and, it is manifest, that he who cannot judge respecting the falsehood, or unfitness of what is said upon a given subject, is equally incompetent to determine upon its truth or beauty?

*Ion.* Assuredly.

*Socrates.* The same person would then be competent or incompetent for both?

*Ion.* Yes.

*Socrates.* Do you not say that Homer and the other poets, and among them Hesiod and Archilochus, speak of the same things, but unequally; one better and the other worse?

*Ion.* And I speak truth.

*Socrates.* But if you can judge of what is well said by the one, you must also be able to judge of what is ill said by another, inasmuch as it expresses less correctly.

*Ion.* It should seem so.

*Socrates.* Then, my dear friend, we should not err if we asserted that Ion possessed a like power of illustration respecting Homer and all other poets; especially since he confesses that the same person must be esteemed a competent judge of all those who speak on the same subjects; inasmuch as those subjects are understood by him when spoken of by one, and the subject-matter of almost all the poets is the same.

*Ion.* What can be the reason then, O Socrates, that when any other poet is the subject of conversation I cannot compel my attention, and I feel utterly unable to declaim anything worth talking of, and positively *no* to sleep? But when any one makes mention of Homer, my mind applies itself without effort to the subject; I awaken as if it were from a trance, and a profusion of eloquent expressions suggest themselves involuntarily?

*Socrates.* It is not difficult to suggest the cause of this, my dear friend. You are evidently unable to declaim on Homer according to art and knowledge; for

did your art endow you with this faculty, you would be equally capable of exerting it with regard to any other of the poets. Is not poetry, as an art or a faculty, a thing entire and one?

*Ion.* Assuredly.

*Socrates.* The same mode of consideration must be admitted with respect to all arts which are severally one and entire. Do you desire to hear what I understand by this, O Ion?

*Ion.* Yes, by Jupiter, Socrates, I am delighted with listening to you wise men.

*Socrates.* It is you who are wise, my dear Ion ; you rhapsodists, actors, and the authors of the poems you recite. I, like an unprofessional and private man, can only speak the truth. Observe how common, vulgar, and level to the comprehension of any one, is the question which I now ask relative to the same consideration belonging to one entire art. Is not painting an art whole and entire?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* Did you ever know a person competent to judge of the paintings of Polygnotus, the son of Aglaophon, and incompetent to judge of the production of any other painter ; who, on the supposition of the works of other painters being exhibited to him, was wholly at a loss, and very much inclined to go to sleep, and lost all faculty of reasoning on the subject ; but when his opinion was required of Polygnotus, or any one single painter you please, awoke, paid attention to the subject, and discoursed on it with great eloquence and sagacity?

*Ion.* Never, by Jupiter !

*Socrates.* Did you ever know any one very skilful in determining the merits of Dædalus, the son of Metion, Epheus, the son of Panopus, Theodorus the Samian, or any other great sculptor, who was immediately at a loss, and felt sleepy the moment any other sculptor was mentioned?

*Ion.* I never met with such a person certainly.

*Socrates.* Nor, do I think, that you ever met with a man professing himself a judge of poetry and rhapsody, and competent to criticize either Olympus, Thamyris,

Orpheus, or Phemius of Ithaca, the rhapsodist, who, the moment he came to Ion the Ephesian, felt himself quite at a loss, and utterly incompetent to judge whether he rhapsodised well or ill.

*Ion.* I cannot refute you, Socrates, but of this I am conscious to myself : that I excel all men in the copiousness and beauty of my illustrations of Homer, as all who have heard me will confess, and with respect to other poets, I am deserted of this power. It is for you to consider what may be the cause of this distinction.

*Socrates.* I will tell you, O Ion, what appears to me to be the cause of this inequality of power. It is that you are not master of any art for the illustration of Homer, but it is a divine influence which moves you, like that which resides in the stone called magnet by Eudipides, and Heraclea by the people. For not only does this stone possess the power of attracting iron rings, but it can communicate to them the power of attracting other rings ; so that you may see sometimes a long chain of rings, and other iron substances, attached and suspended one to the other by this influence. And as the power of the stone circulates through all the links of this series, and attaches each to each, so the Muse, communicating through those whom she has first inspired, to all others capable of sharing in the inspiration, the influence of that first enthusiasm, creates a chain and a succession. For the authors of those great poems which we admire, do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art, but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, *possessed* by a spirit not their own. Thus the composers of lyrical poetry create those admired songs of theirs in a state of divine insanity, like the Corybantes, who lose all control over their reason in the  
 534 enthusiasm of the sacred dance ; and, during this supernatural possession, are excited to the rhythm and harmony which they communicate to men. Like the Bacchantes, who, when possessed by the God, draw honey and milk from the rivers, in which, when they come to their senses, they find nothing but simple water. For the souls of the poets, as poets tell us, have this

peculiar ministration in the world. They tell us that these souls, flying like bees from flower to flower, and wandering over the gardens and the meadows, and the honey-flowing fountains of the Muses, return to us laden with the sweetness of melody; and arrayed as they are in the plumes of rapid imagination, they speak truth. For a Poet is indeed a thing ethereally light, winged, and sacred, nor can he compose anything worth calling poetry until he becomes inspired, and, as it were, mad, or whilst any reason remains in him. For whilst a man retains any portion of the thing called reason, he is utterly incompetent to produce poetry or to vaticinate. Thus, those who declaim various and beautiful poetry upon any subject, as for instance upon Homer, are not enabled to do so by art or study; but every rhapsodist or poet, whether dithyrambic, encomiastic, choral, epic, or iambic, is excellent in proportion to the extent of his participation in the divine influence, and the degree in which the Muse itself has descended on him. In other respects, poets may be sufficiently ignorant and incapable. For they do not compose according to any art which they have acquired, but from the impulse of the divinity within them; for did they know any rules of criticism according to which they could compose beautiful verses upon one subject, they would be able to exert the same faculty with respect to all or any other. The God seems purposely to have deprived all poets, prophets, and soothsayers of every particle of reason and understanding, the better to adapt them to their employment as his ministers and interpreters; and that we, their auditors, may acknowledge that those who write so beautifully, are possessed, and address us, inspired by the God. Tynnicus the Chalcidean is a manifest proof of this, for he never before composed any poem, worthy to be remembered; and yet, was the author of that Pæan which everybody sings, and which excels almost every other hymn, and which he himself acknowledges to have been inspired by the Muse. And, thus, it appears to me that the God proves beyond a doubt, that these transcendent poems are not human as the work of men, but divine as coming from the God. Poets,

then are the interpreters of the divinities—each being possessed by some one deity; and to make this apparent, the God designedly inspires the worst poets with the sublimest verse. Does it seem to you that I am in the  
 535 right, O Ion?

*Ion.* Yes, by Jupiter! My mind is enlightened by your words, O Socrates, and it appears to me that great poets interpret to us through some divine election of the God.

*Socrates.* And do not you rhapsodists interpret poets?

*Ion.* We do.

*Socrates.* Thus you interpret the interpreters?

*Ion.* Evidently.

*Socrates.* Remember this, and tell me; and do not conceal that which I ask. When you declaim well, and strike your audience with admiration; whether you sing of Ulysses rushing upon the threshold of his palace, discovering himself to the suitors, and pouring his shafts out at his feet; or of Achilles assailing Hector; or those affecting passages concerning Andromache, or Hecuba, or Priam, are you then self-possessed? or, rather, are you not rapt and filled with such enthusiasm by the deeds you recite, that you fancy yourself in Ithaca or Troy, or wherever else the poem transports you?

*Ion.* You speak most truly, Socrates, nor will I deny it; for, when I recite of sorrow my eyes fill with tears; and, when of fearful or terrible deeds, my hair stands on end, and my heart beats fast.

*Socrates.* Tell me, Ion, can we call him in his senses, who weeps while dressed in splendid garments, and crowned with a golden coronal, not losing any of these things? and is filled with fear when surrounded by ten thousand friendly persons, not one among whom desires to despoil or injure him?

*Ion.* To say the truth, we could not.

*Socrates.* Do you often perceive your audience moved also?

*Ion.* Many among them, and frequently. I, standing on the rostrum, see them weeping, with eyes fixed earnestly on me, and overcome by my declamation. I have need so to agitate them; for if they weep, I laugh,



taking their money ; if they should laugh, I must weep, going without it.

*Socrates.* Do you not perceive that your auditor is the last link of that chain which I have described as held together through the power of the magnet? You rhapsodists and actors are the middle links, of which the poet is the first—and through all these the God influences whichever mind he selects, as they conduct this power one to the other ; and thus, as rings from the stone, so hangs a long series of chorus-dancers, teachers, and disciples from the Muse. Some poets are influenced by one Muse, some by another ; we call them possessed, and this word really expresses the truth, for they are held. Others, who are interpreters, are inspired by the first links, the poets, and are filled with enthusiasm, some by one, some by another ; some by Orpheus, some by Musæus, but the greater number are possessed and inspired by Homer. You, O Ion, are influenced by Homer. If you recite the works of any other poet, you get drowsy, and are at a loss what to say ; but when you hear any of the compositions of that poet you are roused, your thoughts are excited, and you grow eloquent ;—for what you say of Homer is not derived from any art or knowledge, but from divine inspiration and possession. As the Corybantes feel acutely the melodies of him by whom they are inspired, and abound with verse and gesture for his songs alone, and care for no other ; thus, you, O Ion, are eloquent when you expound Homer, and are barren of words with regard to every other poet. And this explains the question you asked, wherefore Homer, and no other poet, inspires you with eloquence. It is that you are thus excellent in your praise, not through science but from divine inspiration.

*Ion.* You say the truth, Socrates. Yet, I am surprised that you should be able to persuade me that I am possessed and insane when I praise Homer. I think I shall not appear such to you when you hear me.

*Socrates.* I desire to hear you, but not before you have answered me this one question. What subject

does Homer treat best? for, surely, he does not treat all equally.

*Ion.* You are aware that he treats of every thing.

*Socrates.* Does Homer mention subjects on which you are ignorant?

*Ion.* What can those be?

*Socrates.* Does not Homer frequently dilate on  
537 various arts—on chariot-driving, for instance? if I remember the verses I will repeat them.

*Ion.* I will repeat them, for I remember them.

*Socrates.* Repeat what Nestor says to his son Antilochus, counselling him to be cautious in turning, during the chariot-race at the funeral games of Patroclus.

*Ion (repeats).*

Αὐτὸς δὲ κλινθῆναι εὐπλέκτω ἐνὶ δίφῳ  
Ἦκ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοῖον ἀτὰρ τὸν δεξιὸν ἵππον  
Κένσαι ὁμοκλήσας, εἰλαί γέ οἱ ἦνία χερσίν.  
Ἐν νόσση δέ τοι ἵππος ἀριστερὸς ἐγχριμφθήτω,  
Ὅς ἂν τοι πλήμνη γέ δράσsetαι ἄκρον ἱκέσθαι  
Κύκλου ποιητοῖο· λίθου δ' ἀλέασθαι ἐπαυρεῖν.

*Il. ψ. 335.*

*Socrates.* Enough. Now, O Ion, would a physician or a charioteer be the better judge as to Homer's sagacity on this subject?

*Ion.* Of course, a charioteer.

*Socrates.* Because he understands the art—or from what other reason?

*Ion.* From his knowledge of the art.

*Socrates.* For one science is not gifted with the power of judging of another—a steersman, for instance, does not understand medicine?

*Ion.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* Nor a physician, architecture?

*Ion.* Of course not.

*Socrates.* Is it not thus with every art? If we are adepts in one, we are ignorant of another. But first, tell me, do not all arts differ one from the other?

*Ion.* They do.

*Socrates.* For you, as well as I, can testify that when we say an art is the knowledge of one thing, we do not mean that it is the knowledge of another.

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* For, if each art contained the knowledge of all things, why should we call them by different names? we do so that we may distinguish them one from the other. Thus, you as well as I, know that these are five fingers; and if I asked you whether we both meant the same thing or another, when we speak of arithmetic—would you not say the same?

*Ion.* Yes.

*Socrates.* And tell me, when we learn one art we must both learn the same things with regard to it; and other things if we learn another?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* And he who is not versed in an art, is not 538 a good judge of what is said or done with respect to it?

*Ion.* Certainly not.

*Socrates.* To return to the verses which you just recited, do you think that you or a charioteer would be better capable of deciding whether Homer had spoken rightly or not?

*Ion.* Doubtless a charioteer.

*Socrates.* For you are a rhapsodist, and not a charioteer?

*Ion.* Yes.

*Socrates.* And the art of reciting verses is different from that of driving chariots?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* And if it is different, it supposes a knowledge of different things?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* And when Homer introduces Hecamede, the concubine of Nestor, giving Machaon a posset to drink, and he speaks thus—

Οἶνον Πραμνεῖα, φησὶν· ἐπὶ δ' αἵγαιον κενὴ τυρὸν  
Κνήστι χαλκείῃ· παρὰ δὲ κρόμμον ποτῶ ὕψον.

*Il.* v. 639.

does it belong to the medical or rhapsodical art, to determine whether Homer speaks rightly on this subject?

*Ion.* The medical.

*Socrates.* And when he says—

Ἦ δὲ μολυβδαίνῃ ἱκελὴ ἐς βυσσὸν ἵκανεν,  
Ἦ τε κατ' ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας ἐμμεμανῖα  
ἔρχεται ὠμωστήσι μετ' ἰχθύσι πῆμα φέρουσα.  
II. α. 80.

does it belong to the rhapsodical or the piscatorial art, to determine whether he speaks rightly or not?

*Ion.* Manifestly to the piscatorial art.

*Socrates.* Consider whether you are not inspired to make some such demand as this to me:—Come, Socrates, since you have found in Homer an accurate description of these arts, assist me also in the inquiry as to his competence on the subject of soothsayers and divination; and how far he speaks well or ill on such subjects; for he often treats of them in the *Odyssey*, and especially when he introduces Theoclymenus the Soothsayer of the Melampians, prophesying to the Suitors—

539 Δαιμόνιοι, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὕμνων  
εἰλύσεται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε γυῖα,  
Οἰωγῇ δὲ δέηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί.  
Εἰδώλων τε πλεόν πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλὴ  
Ἰεμέων Ἑρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἡέλιος δὲ  
Οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιτέδρημεν ἀχλύς.  
Odys. v. 351.

Often, too, in the *Iliad*, as at the battle at the walls; for he there says—

Ὅρνις γάρ σφιν ἐπῆλθε περησέμεναι μεμαῶσιν,  
Αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης, ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λαὸν ἔργων,  
Φοιηέντα δράκοντα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον,  
Ζῶν, ἔτ' ἀσπαίροντα· καὶ οὐκω λήθετο χάρμης.  
Κόψε γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔχοντα κατὰ πτῆθος παρὰ δειρὴν,  
Ἴδνωθεις ὀπίσω ὃ δ' ἀπὸ ἔθεν ἦκε χαμᾶζε  
Ἀλγῆσας ὀδύνῃσι, μέσφ' δ' ἐγκάββαλ' ὀμίλῳ·  
Αὐτὸς δὲ κλάγξας ἔπετο πνοίῃς ἀνέμοιο.

II. μ.

I assert, it belongs to a soothsayer both to observe and to judge respecting such appearances as these.

*Ion.* And you assert the truth, O Socrates.

*Socrates.* And you also, my dear Ion. For we have in our turn recited from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*,

passages relating to vaticination, to medicine and the piscatorial art; and as you are more skilled in Homer than I can be, do you now make mention of whatever relates to the rhapsodist and his art; for a rhapsodist is competent above all other men to consider and pronounce on whatever has relation to his art.

*Ion.* Or with respect to everything else mentioned by Homer.

*Socrates.* Do not be so forgetful as to say everything. A good memory is particularly necessary for a rhapsodist.

*Ion.* And what do I forget?

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*Socrates.* Do you not remember that you admitted the art of reciting verses was different from that of driving chariots?

*Ion.* I remember.

*Socrates.* And did you not admit that being different, the subjects of its knowledge must also be different?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* You will not assert that the art of rhapsody is that of universal knowledge; a rhapsodist may be ignorant of some things.

*Ion.* Except, perhaps, such things as we now discuss, O Socrates.

*Socrates.* What do you mean by *such* subjects, besides those which relate to other arts? And with which among them do you profess a competent acquaintance, since not with all?

*Ion.* I imagine that the rhapsodist has a perfect knowledge of what it is becoming for a man to speak—what for a woman; what for a slave, what for a free man; what for the ruler, what for him who is governed.

*Socrates.* How! do you think that a rhapsodist knows better than a pilot what the captain of a ship in a tempest ought to say?

*Ion.* In such a circumstance I allow that the pilot would know best.

*Socrates.* Has the rhapsodist or the physician the clearest knowledge of what ought to be said to a sick man?

*Ion.* In that case the physician.

*Socrates.* But you assert that he knows what a slave ought to say?

*Ion.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* To take for example, in the driving of cattle; a rhapsodist would know much better than the herdsman what ought to be said to a slave engaged in bringing back a herd of oxen run wild?

*Ion.* No, indeed.

*Socrates.* But what a woman should say concerning spinning wool?

*Ion.* Of course not.

*Socrates.* He would know, however, what a man, who is a general, should say when exhorting his troops?

*Ion.* Yes; a rhapsodist would know that.

*Socrates.* How! is rhapsody and strategy the same art?

*Ion.* I know what it is fitting for a general to say.

*Socrates.* Probably because you are learned in war, O Ion. For if you are equally expert in horsemanship and playing on the harp, you would know whether a man rode well or ill. But if I should ask you which understands riding best, a horseman or a harper, what would you answer?

*Ion.* A horseman, of course.

*Socrates.* And if you knew a good player on the harp, you would in the same way say that he understood harp-playing and not riding?

*Ion.* Certainly.

541 *Socrates.* Since you understand strategy, you can tell me which is the most excellent, the art of war or rhapsody?

*Ion.* One does not appear to me to excel the other.

*Socrates.* One is not better than the other, say you? Do you say that tactics and rhapsody are two arts or one?

*Ion.* They appear to me to be the same.

*Socrates.* Then a good rhapsodist is also a good general.

*Ion.* Of course.

*Socrates.* And a good general is a good rhapsodist?

*Ion.* I do not say that.

*Socrates.* You said that a good rhapsodist was also a good general.

*Ion.* I did.

*Socrates.* Are you not the best rhapsodist in Greece?

*Ion.* By far, O Socrates.

*Socrates.* And you are also the most excellent general among the Greeks?

*Ion.* I am. I learned the art from Homer.

*Socrates.* How is it, then, by Jupiter, that being both the best general and the best rhapsodist among us, you continually go about Greece rhapsodising, and never lead our armies? Does it seem to you that the Greeks greatly need golden-crowned rhapsodists, and have no want of generals?

*Ion.* My native town, O Socrates, is ruled by yours, and requires no general for her wars;—and neither will your city nor the Lacedemonians elect me to lead their armies—you think your own generals sufficient.

*Socrates.* My good Ion, are you acquainted with Apollodorus the Cyzicenean?

*Ion.* Who do you mean?

*Socrates.* He whom, though a stranger, the Athenians often elected general; and Phanosthenes the Andrian, and Heraclides the Clazomenian, all foreigners, but whom this city has chosen, as being great men, to lead its armies, and to fill other high offices. Would not, therefore, Ion the Ephesian be elected and honoured if he were esteemed capable? Were not the Ephesians originally from Athens, and is Ephesus the least of cities? But if, you spoke true, Ion, and praise Homer according to art and knowledge, you have deceived me,—since you declared that you were learned on the subject of Homer, and would communicate your knowledge to me—but you have disappointed me, and are far from keeping your word. For you will not explain in what you are so excessively clever, though I greatly desire to learn; but, as various as Proteus, you change from one thing to another, and to escape at last, you disappear in the form of a general, without disclosing your Homeric wisdom. If, therefore, you possess the learning which you promised to expound on the subject of Homer, you

deceive me and are false. . But if you are eloquent on the subject of this Poet, not through knowledge, but by inspiration, being possessed by him, ignorant the while of the wisdom and beauty you display, then I allow that you are no deceiver. Choose then whether you will be considered false or inspired?

*Ion.* It is far better, O Socrates, to be thought inspired.

*Socrates.* It is better both for you and for us, O Ion, to say that you are the inspired, and not the learned, eulogist of Homer.



# SYMPOSIUM, OR THE DRINKING PARTY

## APOLLODORUS AND HIS FRIENDS

*Apollodorus.* Oh, if that's what you want to know, it St. isn't long since I had occasion to refresh my memory. III. Only the day before yesterday, as I was coming up to p. the city from my place at Phalerum, a friend of mine 172 caught sight of me from behind; and while I was still a long way ahead he shouted after me: "Here, I say, Apollodorus! Can't you wait for me?" So I stopped and waited for him.

"Apollodorus," he said as he came up, "you're the very man I'm looking for. I want to ask you about this party at Agathon's, when Socrates and Alcibiades and the rest of them were at dinner there. What were all these speeches they were making about Love? I've heard something about them from a man who'd been talking to Phoenix, but his information was rather sketchy and he said I'd better come to you. So you'll have to tell me the whole story; for you know we always count on you, Apollodorus, to report your beloved Socrates. But before you begin, tell me, were you there yourself?"

"Well," said I, "whoever was your informant I can well believe he wasn't very clear about it if you gathered it was such a recent party that I could have been there!"

"That was my impression," said he.

"My dear Glaucon," I protested, "how could it have been? Have you forgotten how long Agathon's been away from Athens? And don't you know it's only two or three years since I started spending so much of my time with Socrates, and making it my business to follow everything he says and does from day to day? Because, 173 you know, before that I used to go dashing about all over the place, firmly convinced that I was leading a full and interesting life, when I was really as wretched as

could be—much the same as you, for instance; for I know philosophy's the last thing *you'd* spend your time on."

"Now don't start girding at me," said Glaucon, "but tell me: when was this party, then?"

"It was given," I told him, "when you and I were in the nursery, the day after Agathon's celebrations with the players when he'd won the prize with his first tragedy."

"Yes," he admitted, "that must have been a good many years ago. But who told you about it—Socrates himself?"

"No, no," I said. "I had it from the same source as Phœnix: Aristodemus of Cydathenæum, a little fellow who used to go about barefoot. He was there himself; indeed I fancy he was one of Socrates' most impassioned admirers at the time. As a matter of fact I did ask Socrates about one or two points later on, and he confirmed what Aristodemus had told me."

"Very well," said Glaucon; "then you must tell me all about it before we reach the city. I'm sure it'll pass the time most agreeably."

Well, I told him all about it as we went along; and so, as I was saying, I've got the story pretty pat; and if you want to hear it too I suppose I may as well begin. For that matter I don't know anything that gives me greater pleasure, or profit either, than talking or listening to philosophy. But when it comes to ordinary conversation, such as the stuff you talk about financiers and the money-market, well, I find it pretty tiresome personally, and I feel sorry that my friends should think they're being very busy when they're really doing absolutely nothing. Of course, I know your idea of me: you think I'm just a poor unfortunate, and I shouldn't wonder if you're right. But then, I don't *think* that you're unfortunate—I know you are.

*A Friend.* There you go again, Apollodorus! Always running down yourself and everybody else! You seem to have some extravagant idea that the whole world, with the sole exception of Socrates, is in a state of utter misery—beginning with yourself. You're always the

same—perhaps that's why people think you're mad—always girding at yourself and all the rest of us, except Socrates of course.

*Apollodorus.* My dear man, of course I am! And of course I shouldn't *dream* of thinking such things about myself or about my friends if I weren't completely crazy.

*The Friend.* Oh, come now, Apollodorus! We needn't go into that. For heaven's sake, man, don't fly off at a tangent, but simply answer our question: What were these speeches about Love?

*Apollodorus.* Well then, they were something like this—but perhaps I'd better begin at the beginning and tell you in Aristodemus' own words. 174

"I met Socrates," he told me, "looking very spruce after his bath, with a nice pair of shoes on although, as you know, he generally goes about barefoot. So I asked him where he was going to, cutting such a dash. 'I'm going to dinner with Agathon,' he said. 'I kept away from the public celebrations yesterday because I was afraid there'd be a crush; but I promised I'd go along this evening. And I've got myself up like this because I don't want to disgrace such a distinguished host. But what about you?' he went on. 'How would you like to join the party uninvited?'

'Just as you think,' I replied.

'Then come along with me,' he said, 'and we'll adapt the proverb, "Unbidden do the good frequent the tables of the good." Though, if it comes to that, Homer himself has not so much adapted that very proverb as exploded it; for after making Agamemnon extremely stout and warlike, and Menelaus a most indifferent spearman, he shows Agamemnon making merry after the sacrifice and Menelaus coming to his table uninvited—that is, the lesser man coming to supper with the greater.'

'I'm afraid,' said I, 'that Homer's version is the apter so far as I'm concerned—an uninvited ignoramus going to dinner with a man of letters. So you'd better be preparing your excuses on the way; for you needn't think I'll apologize for coming without an invitation—I shall plead that you invited me.'

'Two heads are better than one,' he said, 'when it comes to excuses. Well, anyway, let's be off.'

"Having settled this point," continued Aristodemus, "we started out; and as we went along Socrates fell into a fit of abstraction and began to lag behind, but when I was going to wait for him he told me to go on ahead. So when I arrived at Agathon's, where the door was standing wide open, I found myself in rather a curious position; for a servant immediately showed me in and announced me to the assembled company, who were already at table and just about to begin. However, the moment Agathon saw me he cried: 'Ah! Here's Aristodemus—just in time for dinner; and if you've come on business it'll have to wait, that's flat. I was going to invite you yesterday, only I couldn't get hold of you. But I say, where's Socrates? Haven't you brought him with you?'

"I looked round, supposing that Socrates was bringing up the rear, but he was nowhere to be seen; so I explained that we'd been coming along together, and that I'd come at his invitation.

'Very nice of you,' said Agathon; 'but what on earth can have happened to the man?'

175 'He was just coming in behind me; I can't think where he can be.'

'Here,' said Agathon to one of the servants, 'run along and see if you can find Socrates, and show him in. And now, my dear Aristodemus, may I put you next to Eryximachus?'

"And so," Aristodemus went on, "I made my toilet and sat down, the servant meanwhile returning with the news that our friend Socrates had retreated into the next-door neighbour's porch. And there he stood, said the man: and when I asked him in he wouldn't come.

'This is very odd,' said Agathon. 'You must speak to him again, and insist.'

"But here I broke in. 'I shouldn't do that,' I said; 'you'd much better leave him to himself. It's quite a habit of his, you know; off he goes and there he stands, no matter where it is. I've no doubt he'll be with us before long, so I really don't think you'd better worry him.'

'Oh, very well,' said Agathon; 'I expect you know best. We won't wait then,' he said, turning to the servants. 'Now you understand, you fellows are to serve whatever kind of dinner you think fit; I'm leaving it entirely to you. I know it's a new idea; but you'll simply have to imagine that we've all come here as your guests. Now go ahead and show us what you can do.'

"Well, we started dinner, and still there was no sign of Socrates; Agathon still wanted to send for him, but I wouldn't let him. And when at last he did turn up, we weren't more than half-way through dinner, which was pretty good for him. As he came in, Agathon, who was sitting by himself at the far end of the table, called out:

'Here you are, Socrates; come and sit next to me; I want to share this great thought that's just struck you in the porch next door. I'm sure you must have mastered it, or you'd still be standing there.'

'My dear Agathon,' Socrates replied as he took his seat beside him, 'I only wish that wisdom *were* the kind of thing one could share by sitting next to someone: if it flowed, for instance, from the one that was full to the one that was empty, like the water in two cups finding its level through a piece of worsted. If that were how it worked, I'm sure I'd congratulate myself on sitting next to you, for you'd soon have me brimming over with the most exquisite kind of wisdom. My own understanding is a shadowy thing at best, as equivocal as a dream; but yours, Agathon, glitters and dilates—as which of us can forget that saw you the other day, resplendent in your youth, visibly kindled before the eyes of more than thirty thousand of your fellow Greeks.'

'Now, Socrates,' said Agathon, 'I know you're making fun of me; however, I shall take up this question of wisdom with you later on, and let Bacchus judge between us. In the meantime you must really show a little interest in your food.'

"So Socrates drew up and had his dinner with the rest of them; and then, after the libation and the usual hymn and so forth, they began to turn their attention to the wine. It was Pausanias, so far as Aristodemus

could remember, who opened the conversation. 'Well, gentlemen,' he began, 'what do you say? What sort of a night shall we make of it? Speaking for myself, I'm not quite up to form; I'm still a bit the worse for what I had last night; and I don't suppose you're most of you much better—we were all in the same boat. Anyhow, what do you say? How does everybody feel about the drink?'

'That's a most sensible question of yours, Pausanias,' said Aristophanes; 'we don't want to make a burden of it—I speak as one who was pretty well soaked last night.'

'I quite agree,' observed Eryximachus; 'and there is just one question I should like to add: what about Agathon? Has he sufficiently recovered to feel like drinking?'

'Not I,' said Agathon. 'You can count me out.'

'So much the better for me, then,' said Eryximachus; 'and so much the better for Aristodemus and Phædrus and one or two more I could mention; we never could keep up with heavy drinkers like the rest of you. I say nothing of Socrates; for we know he's equal to any occasion, drunk or sober. And now, gentlemen, since nobody seems very anxious to get drunk to-night, I may perhaps be pardoned if I take this opportunity of saying a few words on the true nature of inebriation. My own experience in medicine has entirely satisfied me that vinous excess is detrimental to the human frame. And therefore I can never be a willing party to heavy drinking—regards either myself or my friends—especially when one is only partially recovered from the excesses of the previous night.'

"But here Phædrus broke in. 'My dear Eryximachus,' he said, 'I always do what you tell me to, specially when it really is a case of "doctor's orders"; and I think the others would be well advised to do the same.' Whereupon it was unanimously agreed that this was not to be a drunken party, and that the wine was to be served merely by way of refreshment.

'Very well, then,' said Eryximachus, 'since it is agreed that we need none of us drink more than we

think is good for us, I also propose that we dispense with the services of the flute-girl who has just come in, and let her go and play to herself or to the women inside there, whichever she prefers, while we spend our evening in discussion of a subject which, if you think fit, I am prepared to name.'

"It was generally agreed that he should go on with his proposal, so he continued: 'If I may preface my remarks by a tag from Euripides, "the tale is not my own," as Melanippe says, that I am going to tell, but properly belongs to my friend Phædrus here, who is continually coming to me with the following complaint: Is it not, he asks me, an extraordinary thing, that, for all the hymns and anthems that have been addressed to the other deities, not one single poet has ever sung a song in praise of so ancient and so powerful a god as Love?'

'Take such distinguished men of letters as Prodicus, for instance, with their eulogies in prose of Hercules and all the rest of them—not that *they're* so much out of the way either, but do you know, I once came across a book which enumerated the uses of common salt and sang its praises in the most extravagant terms, and not only salt but all kinds of everyday commodities. Now isn't it, as I say, an extraordinary thing, Eryximachus, that while all these screeds have been written on such trivial subjects, the god of Love has found no man bold enough to sing his praises as they should be sung—Is it not, in short, amazing that there should be so little reverence shown to such a god!

'This, gentlemen, is Phædrus' complaint; and I must say I think it is justified. And, moreover, not only am I willing to oblige him with a contribution on my own account, but also I suggest that this is a most suitable occasion for each one of us to pay homage to the god. If, therefore, gentlemen, this meets with your approval, I venture to think we may spend a very pleasant evening in discussion. I suppose the best way would be for each in turn from left to right to address the company and speak to the best of his ability in praise of Love. Phædrus, I think, should open the debate; for besides being head of the table, he is the real author of our discussion.'

'The motion is carried, Eryximachus,' said Socrates, 'unanimously, I should think. Speaking for myself, I couldn't very well dissent when I claim that Love is the one thing in the world I understand; nor could Agathon and Pausanias; neither could Aristophanes, whose whole life is devoted to Dionysus and Aphrodite; no more could any of our friends who are here with us to-night. Of course, your procedure will come very hard on us who are sitting at the bottom of the table; but if the earlier speeches are fine enough, I promise you we shan't complain. So let Phædrus go ahead with his eulogy of Love—and good luck to him.'

178 Then all the rest of them agreed, and told Phædrus to begin—but before I go on I must make it quite clear that Aristodemus did not pretend to reproduce the various speeches verbatim, any more than I could repeat them word for word as I had them from him. I shall simply recount such passages as the speaker or the thought itself made, so far as I could judge, especially memorable. As I was saying, then, Phædrus opened with some such arguments as these: That Love was a great god, wonderful alike to the gods and to mankind; and that of all the proofs of this the greatest was his birth. "The worship of this god," he said, "is of the oldest; for Love is unbegotten, nor is there mention of his parentage to be found anywhere in either prose or verse; while Hesiod tells us expressly that chaos first appeared, and then

From chaos rose broad-bosomed earth, the sure  
And everlasting seat of all that is;  
And after, Love . . .

Acusilaus agrees with Hesiod, for he holds that after chaos were brought forth these twain, earth and Love; and Parmenides writes of the creative principle:

And Love she framed the first of all the gods.

"Thus we find that the antiquity of Love is universally admitted, and in very truth he is the ancient source of all our highest good. For I, at any rate, could hardly name a greater blessing to the man that is to be, than a



generous lover; or to the lover, than the beloved youth. For neither family, nor privilege, nor wealth, nor anything but Love can light that beacon which a man must steer by when he sets out to live the better life. How shall I describe it—as that contempt for the vile, and emulation of the good, without which neither cities nor citizens are capable of any great or noble work. And I will say this of the lover, that, should he be discovered in some inglorious act, or in abject submission to ill-usage, he could better bear that any one—father, friends, or who you will—should witness it than his beloved. And the same holds good of the beloved: that his confusion would be more than ever painful if he were seen by his lovers in an unworthy light.

“If only, then, a city or an army could be composed of none but lover and beloved, how could they deserve better of their country than by shunning all that is base, in mutual emulation; and men like these fighting 179 shoulder to shoulder, few as they were, might conquer—I had almost said—the whole world in arms. For the lover would rather any one than his beloved should see him leave the ranks or throw away his arms in flight—nay, he would sooner die a thousand deaths. Nor is there any lover so faint of heart that he could desert his beloved or fail to help him in the hour of peril; for the very presence of Love kindles the same flame of valour in the faintest heart that burns in those whose courage is innate. And so, when Homer writes that some god ‘breathed might’ into one of the heroes, we may take it that this is what the power of Love effects in the heart of the lover.

“And again, nothing but Love will make a man offer his life for another’s—and not only man but woman; of which last we Greeks can ask no better witness than Alceſtis; for she alone was ready to lay down her life for her husband, for all he had a father and a mother, whose love fell so far short of hers in charity that they seemed to be alien to their own son, and bound to him by nothing but a name. But hers was accounted so great a sacrifice, not only by mankind but by the gods, that in recognition of her magnanimity it was granted—

and among the many doers of many noble deeds there is only the merest handful to whom such grace has been given—that her soul should rise again from the Stygian depths.

“ Thus heaven itself has a peculiar regard for ardour and resolution in the cause of Love. And yet the gods sent Orpheus away from Hades empty-handed, and showed him the mere shadow of the woman he had come to seek : Eurydice herself they would not let him take, because he seemed, like the mere minstrel that he was, to be a lukewarm lover, lacking the courage to die as Alcestis died for love, and choosing rather to scheme his way, living, into Hades. And it was for this that the gods doomed him and doomed him justly, to meet his death at the hands of women.

“ How different was the fate of Achilles, Thetis' son, whom they sent with honours to the Islands of the Blessed, because, after learning from his mother that if he slew Hector he should die, while if he spared him he should end his days at home in the fullness of his years, he made the braver choice and went to rescue his lover Patroclus, avenged his death, and so died, not only for  
180 his friend, but to be with his friend in death. And it was because his lover had been so precious to him that he was honoured so signally by the gods.

“ I may say that Æschylus has reversed the relation between them by referring to Patroclus as Achilles' darling ; whereas Achilles, we know, was much handsomer than Patroclus or any of the heroes, and was besides still beardless and, as Homer says, by far the younger of the two. I make a point of this because, while in any case the gods display especial admiration for the valour that springs from Love, they are even more amazed, delighted, and beneficent when the beloved shows such devotion to his lover, than when the lover does the same for his beloved. For the lover, by virtue of Love's inspiration, is always nearer than his beloved to the gods. And this, I say, is why they paid more honour to Achilles than to Alcestis, and sent him to the Islands of the Blessed.

“ In short, this, gentlemen, is my theme : that Love

is the oldest and most glorious of the gods; the great giver of all goodness and happiness to men, alike to the living and to the dead."

This, to the best of Aristodemus' recollection, was Phædrus' speech. It was followed by several more which had almost, if not quite, escaped him; so he went straight on to Pausanias, who spoke as follows :

"I am afraid, my dear Phædrus, that our arrangement won't work very well if it means that we are simply to pronounce a eulogy of Love. It would be all very well if there were only one kind of Love; but unfortunately this is not the case, and we should therefore have begun by stipulating which kind in particular was to receive our homage. In the circumstances I will try to set the matter right by first defining the Love whom we are to honour, and then singing his praises in terms not unworthy, I hope, of his divinity.

"Now you will all agree, gentlemen, that without Love there could be no such goddess as Aphrodite. If, then, there were only one goddess of that name, we might suppose that there was only one kind of Love; but since in fact there are two such goddesses there must also be two kinds of Love. No one, I think, will deny that there are two goddesses of that name : one, the elder, sprung from no mother's womb but from the heavens themselves, we call the Uranian, the heavenly Aphrodite; while the younger, daughter of Zeus and Dione, we call Pandemus, the earthly Aphrodite. It follows, then, that Love should be known as earthly or as heavenly according to the goddess in whose company his work is done. And our business, gentlemen—I need hardly say that every god must command our homage—our business at the moment is to define the attributes peculiar to each of these two.

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"Now it may be said of any kind of action that the action itself, as such, is neither good nor bad. Take, for example, what we are doing now : neither drinking nor singing nor talking have any virtue in themselves, for the outcome of each action depends upon how it is performed. If it is done rightly and finely, the action will be good : if it is done basely, bad. And this holds

good of loving, for Love is not of himself either admirable or noble, but only when he moves us to love nobly.

"Well then, gentlemen, the earthly Aphrodite's Love is a very earthly Love indeed, and does his work entirely at random. It is he that governs the passions of the vulgar; for, first, they are as much attracted by women as by boys; next, whoever they may love, their desires are of the body rather than of the soul; and, finally, they make a point of courting the shallowest people they can find, looking forward to the mere act of fruition and careless whether it be a worthy or unworthy consummation. And hence they take their pleasures where they find them, good and bad alike; for this is the Love of the younger Aphrodite, whose nature partakes of both male and female.

"But the heavenly Love springs from a goddess whose attributes have nothing of the female, but are altogether male; and who is also the elder of the two, and innocent of any hint of lewdness. And so those who are inspired by this other Love turn rather to the male, preferring the more vigorous and intellectual bent. One can always tell—even among the lovers of boys—the man who is wholly governed by this elder Love; for no boy can please him until he has shown the first signs of dawning intelligence, signs which generally appear with the first growth of beard. And it seems to me that the man who falls in love with a youth of such an age will be prepared to spend all his time with him, to share his whole life with him, in fact; nor will he be likely to take advantage of the lad's youth and credulity by seducing him and then turning with a laugh to some newer love.

"But I cannot help thinking, gentlemen, that there should be a law to forbid the loving of mere boys, a law to prevent so much time and trouble being wasted upon an unknown quantity—for what else, after all, is the future of any boy, and who knows whether he will follow the paths of virtue or of vice, in body and in soul? Of course, your man of principle is a law unto himself; but these followers of the earthly Love should

be legally compelled to observe a similar restraint— 182  
just as we prevent them, as far as possible, from making love to our own wives and daughters—for it is their behaviour that has brought the name of Love into such disrepute that one has even heard it held to be degrading to yield to a lover's solicitation. Any one who can hold such a view must surely have in mind these earthly lovers, with their offensive importunities; for there can be nothing derogatory in any conduct which is sanctioned both by decency and custom.

"Then again, gentlemen, may I point out that, while in all the other States of Hellas the laws that deal with Love are so simple and well defined that they are easy enough to master, our own code is most involved. In Elis and Bœotia, for instance, and wherever else the people are naturally inarticulate, it has been definitely ruled that it is right for the lover to have his way; nor does any one, old or young, presume to say that it is wrong; the idea being, I suppose, to save themselves from having to plead with the young men for their favours—which is rather difficult for lovers who are practically dumb.

"On the other hand, in Ionia and many other countries under Oriental rule, the very same thing is held to be disgraceful. Indeed, the Oriental thinks ill not only of Love but also of both philosophy and sport, on account of the despotism under which he lives; for I suppose it does not suit the rulers for their subjects to indulge in high thinking, or in staunch friendship and fellowship, which Love more than anything is likely to beget. And those who seized the power here in Athens learnt the same lesson from bitter experience, for it was the might of Aristogeiton's love and Harmodius' friendship that brought their reign to an end. Thus, wherever the law enacts that it is wrong to yield to the lover, you may be sure that the fault lies with the legislators; that is to say, it is due to the oppression of the rulers and the servility of their subjects. On the other hand, wherever you find the same thing expressly sanctioned, you may blame the legislators' mental inertia.

"But in Athens, gentlemen, we have a far more

admirable code—a code which, as I was saying, is not nearly so easy to understand. Take for instance our maxim that it is better to love openly than in secret, especially when the object of one's passion is eminent in nobility and virtue, and even if his personal appearance should lack the same distinction; and think how we all love to cheer the lover on, without the least idea that he is doing anything unworthy, and how we see honour in his success and shame in his defeat. And remember, gentlemen, what latitude the law offers to the lover in the prosecution of his suit, and how he may be actually applauded for conduct which, in any other  
183 circumstances or in any other cause, would call down upon him the severest censure.

“Imagine what would happen to a man who wanted to get money out of someone, or a post, or powers of some kind, and who therefore thought fit to behave as the lover behaves to his beloved—urging his need with prayers and entreaties, and vowing vows, and sleeping upon doorsteps; subjecting himself, in short, to a slavery which no slave would ever endure—why, gentlemen, not only his friends, but his very enemies, would do their best to stop him; for his enemies would accuse him of the most abject servility, while his friends would take him to task because they felt ashamed of him.

“But when it is a lover who does this kind of thing people only think the more of him; and the law expressly sanctions his conduct as the means to an honourable end. And, what is the most extraordinary thing of all, it is popularly supposed that the lover is the one man whom the gods will pardon for breaking his vows: for lovers' promises, they say, are made to be forsworn. And so, gentlemen, we see what complete indulgence, not only human but divine, is accorded to the lover by our Athenian code.

“In view of this, one would have thought that, here if anywhere, loving and being kind to one's lover would have been positively applauded. Yet we find in practice that if a father discovers that someone has fallen in love with his son, he puts the boy in charge of an attendant, with strict injunctions not to let him have

anything to do with his lover; and if the boy's little friends and playmates see anything of that kind going on, you may be sure they'll call him names; while their elders will neither stop their being rude nor tell them they are talking nonsense. So if there were no more to it than that, any one would think that we Athenians were really shocked at the idea of yielding to a lover.

"But I fancy we can account for the apparent contradiction if we remember that the moral value of the act is not what one might call a constant. We agreed that Love itself, as such, was neither good nor bad, but only in so far as it led to good or bad behaviour. It is base to indulge a vicious lover viciously, but noble to gratify a virtuous lover virtuously. Now the vicious lover is the follower of the earthly Love who desires the body rather than the soul; his heart is set on what is mutable and must therefore be inconstant. And as soon as the body he loves begins to pass the first flower of its beauty, he 'spreads his wings and flies away,' giving the lie to all his pretty speeches and dishonouring his vows: whereas the lover whose heart is touched by moral beauties is constant all his life, for he has become one with what will never fade.

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"Now it is the object of the Athenian law to make a firm distinction between the lover who should be encouraged and the lover who should be shunned. And so it enjoins pursuit in certain cases, and flight in others; and applies various touchstones and criteria to discriminate between the two classes of lover and beloved. And this is why it is immoral, according to our code, to yield too promptly to solicitation; there should first be a certain lapse of time, which is generally considered to be the most effective test. Secondly, it is immoral when the surrender is due to financial or political considerations, or to unmanly fear of ill-treatment; it is immoral, in short, if the youth fails to show the contempt he should for any advantage he may gain in pocket or position. For in motives such as these we can find nothing fixed or permanent, except, perhaps, the certainty that they have never been the cause of any noble friendship.

"There remains, therefore, only one course open to the beloved if he is to yield to his lover without offending our ideas of decency: it is held that, just as the lover's willing and complete subjection to his beloved is neither abject nor culpable, so there is one other form of voluntary submission that shall be blameless—a submission which is made for the sake of virtue. And so, gentlemen, if any one is prepared to devote himself to the service of another in the belief that through him he will find increase of wisdom or of any other virtue, we hold that such willing servitude is neither base nor abject.

"We must therefore combine these two laws—the one that deals with the love of boys and the one that deals with the pursuit of wisdom and the other virtues—before we can agree that the youth is justified in yielding to his lover. For it is only when lover and beloved come together, each governed by his own especial law—the former lawfully enslaving himself to the youth he loves, in return for his compliance: the latter lawfully devoting his services to the friend who is helping him to become wise and good—the one sharing his wealth of wisdom and virtue, and the other drawing, in his poverty, upon his friend for a liberal education—it is then, I say, and only then, when the observance of the two laws coincides, that it is right for the lover to have his way.

185 "There is no shame in being disappointed of such hopes as these; but any other kind of hope, whether it comes true or not, is shameful in itself. Take the case of a youth who gratifies his lover in the belief that he is wealthy and in the hope of making money: such hopes will be none the less discreditable if he finds in the event that he has been the prey of a penniless seducer; for he will have shown himself for what he is, the kind of person, namely, who will do anything for money—which is nothing to be proud of. But suppose that he had yielded because he believed in his lover's virtue, and hoped to be improved by such an association: then, even if he discovered in the end that he had been duped by an unholy blackguard, there would still have been something noble in his mistake; for he, too,



would have shown himself for what he was—the kind of person who will do anything for anybody for the sake of progress in the ways of virtue; and what, gentlemen, could be more admirable than that? I conclude, therefore, that it is right to let the lover have his way in the interests of virtue.

“Such, then, is the Love of the heavenly Aphrodite, heavenly in himself and precious alike to cities and to men, for he constrains both lover and beloved to pay the most earnest heed to their moral welfare; but all the rest are followers of the other, the earthly Aphrodite. And this, Phædrus, is all I have to say, extempore, on the subject of Love.”

When Pausanias had paused—you see the kind of tricks we catch from our philologists, with their punning derivations—the next speaker, so Aristodemus went on to tell me, should have been Aristophanes; only as it happened, whether he'd been overeating I don't know, but he had got the hiccups so badly that he really wasn't fit to make a speech. So he said to the doctor, Eryximachus, who was sitting next below him

“Eryximachus, you'll either have to cure my hiccups or take my turn and go on speaking till they've stopped.”

“I'm prepared to do both,” said Eryximachus; “I'll take your turn to speak, and then when you've recovered you can take mine. Meanwhile, you'd better try holding your breath, or if that won't stop your hiccup try gargling with a little water; or if it's particularly stubborn you'll have to get something that you can tickle your nostrils with, and sneeze; and by the time you've done that two or three times you'll find that it will stop, however bad it is.”

“Go ahead, then,” said Aristophanes; “you make your speech; and I'll be doing as you say.”

Whereupon Eryximachus spoke as follows: “Well, gentlemen, since Pausanias broke off, after an excellent beginning, without having really finished, I must try to wind up his argument myself. I admit that in defining the two kinds of Love he has drawn a very useful distinction; but the science of medicine seems to me to

prove that, besides attracting the souls of men to human beauty, Love has many other objects and many other subjects; and that his influence may be traced both in the brute and the vegetable creations, and I think I may say, in every force of existence—so great, so wonderful, and so all-embracing is the power of Love in every activity, whether sacred or profane.

“I propose, in deference to my own profession, to begin with the medical aspect. I would have you know that the body comprehends in its very nature the dichotomy of Love; for, as we all agree, bodily health and sickness are both distinct and dissimilar; and unlike clings to unlike. And so the desires of health are one thing, while the desires of sickness are quite another. I confirm what Pausanias has observed, that it is right to yield to the virtuous and wrong to yield to the vicious lover; and similarly, in the case of the body, it is both right and necessary to gratify such desires as are sound and healthy in each particular case; and this is what we call the art of medicine. But it is utterly wrong to indulge such desires as are bad and morbid, nor must any one who hopes to become expert in this profession lend his countenance to such indulgence. For medicine may be described as the science of what the body loves, or desires, as regards repletion and evacuation; and the man who can distinguish between what is harmful and what is beneficial in these desires may claim to be a physician in the fullest sense of the word. And if he can replace one desire with another, and produce the requisite desire when it is absent, or, if necessary, remove it when it is present, then we shall regard him as an expert practitioner.

“Yes, gentlemen, he must be able to reconcile the jarring elements of the body, and force them, as it were, to fall in love with one another. Now, we know that the most hostile elements are the opposites; hot and cold, sweet and sour, wet and dry, and so on; and if, as I do myself, we are to believe these poets of ours, it was his skill in imposing love and concord upon these opposites that enabled our illustrious progenitor Asclepius to found the science of medicine.

“ And so, gentlemen, I maintain that medicine is under the sole direction of the god of Love; as are also the gymnastic and the agronomic arts. And it must be obvious to the most casual observer that the same holds good of music—which is, perhaps, what Heracleitus meant us to understand by that rather cryptic pronouncement: ‘The one in conflict with itself is held together, like the harmony of the bow and of the lyre.’ Of course it is absurd to speak of harmony as being in conflict, or as arising out of elements which are still conflicting; but perhaps he meant that the art of music was to create harmony by resolving the discord between the treble and the bass. There can certainly be no harmony of treble and bass while they are still in conflict, for harmony is concord, and concord is a kind of sympathy; and sympathy between things which are in conflict is impossible so long as that conflict lasts. There is, on the other hand, a kind of discord which it is not impossible to resolve, and here we may effect a harmony—as, for instance, we produce rhythm by resolving the difference between fast and slow. And just as we saw that the concord of the body was brought about by the art of medicine, so this other harmony is due to the art of music, as the creator of mutual love and sympathy. And so we may describe music, too, as a science of love, or of desire—in this case in relation to harmony and rhythm. 187

“ It is easy enough to distinguish the principle of Love in this rhythmic and harmonic union; nor is there so far any question of Love’s dichotomy. But when we come to the application of rhythm and harmony to human activities—as for instance the composition of a song, or the instruction of others in the correct performance of airs and measures which have already been composed—then, gentlemen, we meet with difficulties which call for expert handling. And this brings us back to our previous conclusion, that we are justified in yielding to the desires of the temperate—and of the intemperate in so far as such compliance will tend to sober them; and to this Love, gentlemen, we must hold fast, for he is the fair and heavenly one, born of Urania, the muse of

heaven. But as for that other, the earthly Love, he is sprung from Polymnia, the muse of many songs; and whatever we have to do with him we must be very careful not to add the evils of excess to the enjoyment of the pleasures he affords—just as, in my own profession, it is an important part of our duties to regulate the pleasures of the table so that we may enjoy our meals without being the worse for them. And so in music, in medicine, and in every activity, whether sacred or profane, we must do our utmost to distinguish the two kinds of Love, for you may be sure that they will both be  
188 there.

“ And again, we find these two elements in the seasons of the year; for when the regulating principle of Love brings together those opposites of which I spoke—hot and cold, wet and dry—and compounds them in an ordered harmony, the result is health and plenty for mankind, and for the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and all goes as it should. But when the seasons are under the influence of that other Love, all is mischief and destruction; for now plague and disease of every kind attack both herds and crops; and not only these, but frost and hail and blight—and all of them are due to the uncontrolled and the acquisitive in that great system of Love which the astronomer observes when he investigates the movements of the stars and the seasons of the year.

“ And further, the sole concern of every rite of sacrifice and divination—that is to say, the means of communion between god and man—is either the preservation or the repair of Love. For most of our impiety springs from our refusal to gratify the more temperate Love, and to respect and defer to him in everything we do; and from our following that other Love in our attitude towards our parents, whether alive or dead, and towards the gods. It is the diviner’s office to be the guide and healer of these Loves, and his art of divination, with its power to distinguish those principles of human love that tend to decency and reverence, is, in fact, the source of concord between god and man.

“ And so, gentlemen, the power of Love in its entirety

is various and mighty, nay, all-embracing; but the mightiest power of all is wielded by that Love whose just and temperate consummation, whether in heaven or on earth, tends towards the good. It is he that bestows our every joy upon us, and it is through him that we are capable of the pleasures of society, ay, and friendship even, with the gods our masters.

"And now, gentlemen, if, as is not unlikely, there are many points I have omitted in my praise of Love, let me assure you that such omissions have been unintentional. It is for you, Aristophanes, to make good my deficiencies; that is unless you're thinking of some other kind of eulogy. But in any case, let us hear what you have to say—now you've recovered from your hiccups."

To which, Aristodemus went on to tell me, Aristophanes replied:

"Yes, I'm better now, thank you; but not before I'd had recourse to sneezing—which made me wonder, Eryximachus, how your orderly principle of the body could possibly have called for such an appalling union of noise and irritation: yet there's no denying that the hiccups stopped immediately I sneezed."

"Now, Aristophanes, take care," retorted Eryximachus, "and don't try to raise a laugh before you've even started. You'll only have yourself to thank if I'm waiting to pounce on your silly jokes, instead of giving your speech a proper hearing."

Aristophanes laughed. "You're quite right, Eryximachus," he said; "I take it all back. But don't be too hard on me. Not that I mind if what I'm going to say is funny—all the better if it is; besides, a comic poet is supposed to be amusing. I'm only afraid of being utterly absurd."

"Now, Aristophanes," said Eryximachus; "I know the way you loose your shafts of ridicule and run away. But don't forget that anything you say may be used against you—and yet, who knows? perhaps I shall decide to let you go with a caution."

"Well then, Eryximachus," Aristophanes began, "I propose, as you suggested, to take quite a different line from you and Pausanias. I am convinced that mankind

has never had any conception of the power of Love; for if we had known him as he really is, surely we should have raised the mightiest temples and altars, and offered the most splendid sacrifices, in his honour, and not—as in fact we do—have utterly neglected him. Yet he of all the gods has the best title to our service, for he, more than all the rest, is the friend of man: he is our great ally, and it is he that cures us of those ills whose relief opens the way to man's highest happiness. And so, gentlemen, I will do my best to acquaint you with the power of Love; and you in your turn shall pass the lesson on.

“First of all I must explain the real nature of man, and the change which it has undergone—for in the beginning we were nothing like we are now. For one thing, the race was divided into three; that is to say, besides the two sexes, male and female, which we have at present, there was a third which partook of the nature of both, and for which we still have a name, though the creature itself is forgotten. For though ‘hermaphrodite’ is only used nowadays as a term of contempt, there really was a man-woman in those days, a being which was half male and half female.

190 “And secondly, gentlemen, each of these beings was globular in shape, with rounded back and sides, four arms and four legs, and two faces, both the same, on a cylindrical neck; and one head, with one face one side and one the other, and four ears, and two lots of privates, and all the other parts to match. They walked erect, as we do ourselves, backwards or forwards, whichever they pleased; but when they broke into a run they simply stuck their legs straight out and went whirling round and round like a clown turning cartwheels. And since they had eight legs, if you count their arms as well, you can imagine that they went bowling along at a pretty good speed.

“The three sexes, I may say, arose as follows: the males were descended from the sun, the females from the earth, and the hermaphrodites from the moon, which partakes of either sex; and they were round and they *went* round, because they took after their parents. And

such, gentlemen, was their strength and energy, and such their arrogance, that they actually tried—like Ephialtes and Otus in Homer—to scale the heights of heaven and set upon the gods.

“At this Zeus took counsel with the other gods as to what was to be done. They found themselves in rather an awkward position; they didn’t want to blast them out of existence with thunderbolts as they did the giants, because that would be saying good-bye to all their offerings and devotions; but at the same time they couldn’t let them get altogether out of hand. At last, however, after racking his brains, Zeus offered a solution.

“I think I can see my way, he said, to put an end to this disturbance by weakening these people without destroying them. What I propose to do is to cut them all in half, thus killing two birds with one stone; for each one will be only half as strong, and there’ll be twice as many of them, which will suit us very nicely. They can walk about, upright, on their two legs; and if, said Zeus, I have any more trouble with them, I shall split them up again, and they’ll have to hop about on one.

“So saying, he cut them all in half just as you or I might chop up sorb-apples for pickling, or slice an egg with a hair. And as each half was ready he told Apollo to turn its face, with the half-neck that was left, towards the side that was cut away—thinking that the sight of such a gash might frighten it into keeping quiet—and then to heal the whole thing up. So Apollo turned their faces back to front, and, pulling in the skin all the way round, he stretched it over what we now call the belly—like those bags you pull together with a string—and tied up the one remaining opening so as to form what we call the navel. As for the creases that were left, he smoothed 191 most of them away, finishing off the chest with the sort of tool a cobbler uses to smooth down the leather on the last; but he left a few puckers round about the belly and the navel, to remind us of what we suffered long ago.

“Now, when the work of bisection was complete it left each half with a desperate yearning for the other; and they ran together and flung their arms around each

other's necks, and asked for nothing better than to be rolled into one. So much so, that they began to die of hunger and general inertia, for neither would do anything without the other. And whenever one half was left alone by the death of its mate, it wandered about questing and clasping in the hope of finding a spare half-woman—or a whole woman, as we should call her nowadays—or half a man. And so the race was dying out.

“Fortunately, however, Zeus felt so sorry for them that he devised another scheme. He moved their privates round to the front; for of course they had originally been on the outside—which was now the back—and they had begotten and conceived not upon each other, but, like the grasshoppers, upon the earth. So now, as I say, he moved their members round to the front and made them propagate among themselves, the male begetting upon the female—the idea being that if, in all these clippings and claspings, a man should chance upon a woman, conception would take place and the race would be continued : while if man should conjugate with man, he might at least obtain such satisfaction as would allow him to turn his attention and his energies to the everyday affairs of life. So you see, gentlemen, how far back we can trace our innate love for one another; and how this love is always trying to reintegrate our former nature, to make two into one, and to bridge the gulf between one human being and another.

“And so, gentlemen, we are all like pieces of the coins that children break in half for keepsakes—making two out of one, like the flat-fish—and each of us is forever seeking the half that will tally with himself. The man who is a slice of the hermaphrodite sex, as it was called, will naturally be attracted by women—the adulterer, for instance; and women who run after men are of similar descent—as, for instance, the unfaithful wife. But the woman who is a slice of the original female is attracted by women rather than by men—in fact she is a Lesbian : while men who are slices of the male are followers of the male, and show their masculinity throughout their boyhood by the way they make  
192 friends with men, and the delight they take in lying



beside them and being taken in their arms. And these are the most hopeful of the nation's youth, for theirs is the most virile constitution.

"I know there are some people who call them shameless; but they are wrong. It is not immodesty that leads them to such pleasures, but daring, fortitude, and masculinity; the very virtues that they recognize and welcome in their lovers—which is proved by the fact that in after years they are the only men who show any real manliness in public life. And so, when they themselves have come to manhood, their love in turn is lavished upon boys: they have no natural inclination to marry and beget children. Indeed, they only do so in deference to the usage of society, for they would just as soon renounce marriage altogether and spend their lives with one another.

"Such a man, then, gentlemen, is of an amorous disposition, and gives his love to boys, always clinging to his like. And so, when this boy-lover—or any lover, for that matter—is fortunate enough to meet his other half, they are both so intoxicated with affection, with friendship, and with love, that they cannot bear to let each other out of sight for a single instant. It is such reunions as these that impel men to spend their lives together, although they may be hard put to it to say what they really want with one another; and indeed, the purely sexual pleasures of their friendship could hardly account for the huge delight they take in one another's company. The fact is that both their souls are longing for a something else—a something to which they can neither of them put a name, and which they can only give an inkling of in cryptic sayings and prophetic riddles.

"Now, supposing Hephæstus were to come and stand over them with his tool-bag as they lay there side by side; and suppose he were to ask:

'Tell me, my dear creatures; what do you really want with one another?'

"And suppose they didn't know what to say, and he went on:

'How would you like to be rolled into one, so that you could always be together, day and night, and never

be parted again? Because if that's what you want, I can easily weld you together; and then you can live your two lives in one, and, when the time comes, you can die a common death and still be two-in-one in the lower world. Now, what do you say? Is that what you'd like me to do? And would you be happy if I did?

"We may be sure, gentlemen, that no lover on earth would dream of refusing such an offer, for not one of them could imagine a happier fate. Indeed, they would be convinced that this was just what they'd been waiting for—to be merged, that is, into an utter one-ness with the beloved.

193 "And so all this to-do is a relic of that original state of ours, when we were whole; and now, when we are longing for and following after that primeval wholeness, we say we are in love. For there was a time, I repeat, when we were one; but now, for our sins, god has scattered us abroad, as the Spartans scattered the Arcadians. Moreover, gentlemen, there is every reason to fear that, if we neglect the worship of the gods, they will split us up again; and then we shall have to go about with our noses sawn asunder, part and counterpart, like the basso-relievos on the tombstones. And therefore it is our duty one and all to inspire our friends with reverence and piety, for so we may ensure our safety and attain that blessed union by enlisting in the army of Love and marching beneath his banners.

"For Love must never be withstood—as we do, if we incur the displeasure of the gods. But if we cling to him in friendship and reconciliation, we shall be among the happy few to whom it is given in these latter days to meet their other halves. Now, I don't want any coarse remarks from Eryximachus. I don't mean Pausanias and Agathon, though for all I know they may be among the lucky ones, and both be sections of the male. But what I am trying to say is this: that the happiness of the whole human race, women no less than men, is to be found in the consummation of our love, and in the healing of our dismembered nature by finding each his proper mate. And if this be a counsel of perfection, then we must do what, in our present circumstances, is next best,

and bestow our love upon the natures most congenial to our own.

"And so I say that Love, the god who brings all this to pass, is worthy of our hymns; for his is the inestimable and present service of conducting us to our true affinities; and it is he that offers this great hope for the future: that, if we do not fail in reverence to the gods, he will one day heal us and restore us to our old estate, and establish us in joy and blessedness.

"Such, Eryximachus, is my discourse on Love—as different as could be from yours. And now I must ask you again: will you please refrain from making fun of it, and let us hear what all the others have to say—or rather, the other two, for I see there's no one left but Agathon and Socrates."

"Well, you shall have your way," said Eryximachus; "and, joking apart, I enjoyed your speech immensely. Indeed, if I were not aware that Socrates and Agathon were both authorities on Love, I should be wondering what they could find to say after being treated to such a wealth and variety of eloquence. But, knowing what they are, I've no doubt we'll find them equal to the occasion."

To which Socrates retorted: "It's all very well for you to talk, Eryximachus, after your own magnificent display; but if you were in my shoes now—or rather when Agathon has finished speaking—you'd be just as nervous as I am." 194

"Now, Socrates," said Agathon; "I suppose you're trying to upset me by insisting on the great things my public is expecting of me."

"My dear Agathon," said Socrates, "do you think I don't remember your ease and dignity as you took the stage with the actors the other day; and how you looked that vast audience in the face, as cool as you please, and obviously prepared to show them what you were made of? And am I to suppose that the sight of two or three friends will put you out of countenance?"

"Ah, but, Socrates," protested Agathon, "you mustn't think I'm so infatuated with the theatre as to forget that a man of any judgment cares more for a handful of brains than an army of blockheads."

"Oh, I should never make such a mistake," Socrates assured him, "as to credit *you*, my dear Agathon, with ideas that smacked of the illiterate. I've no doubt that if you found yourself in what you really considered intellectual company, you'd be more impressed by their opinion than by the mob's. But we, alas, can't claim to be your intelligent minority; for we were there too, you know, helping to swell that very crowd. But tell me: if you were with some other set of people, whose judgment you respected, I suppose you'd feel uncomfortable if they saw you doing anything you thought beneath you. Am I right?"

"Perfectly," said Agathon.

"And yet," Socrates went on, "you wouldn't feel uncomfortable if the *mob* saw you doing something equally unworthy?"

But here Phædrus stepped in. "My dear Agathon," he said, "if you go on answering his questions he won't care twopence what becomes of our debate, so long as there's someone he can argue with—especially if it's somebody good-looking. Now, much as I enjoy listening to Socrates' arguments, it's my duty as chairman to insist that each man makes his speech. So I must ask you both to pay your tribute to the god, and then you can argue as much as you please."

"Phædrus is right," said Agathon: "I'm quite prepared to speak. After all, I can argue with Socrates any day."

"Now, before I begin my speech I want to explain what sort of a speech I think it ought to be. For to my way of thinking the speakers we have heard so far have been at such pains to congratulate mankind upon the blessings of Love that they have quite forgotten to extol the god himself, and have thrown no light at all upon the  
195 nature of our divine benefactor. Yet surely, if we are to praise any one, no matter whom, no matter how, there is only one way to go about it, and that is to indicate the nature of him whose praises we are to sing, and of the blessings he is the author of. And so, gentlemen, with Love: our duty is first to praise him for what he is; and secondly, for what he gives.

"And so I shall begin by maintaining that, while all the gods are blessed, Love—be it said in all reverence—is the blesseddest of all, for he is the loveliest and the best. The loveliest, I say, because first of all, Phædrus, he is the youngest of the gods, which is proved by his flight, aye, and his escape, from the ravages of Time, who travels fast enough; too fast, at any rate, for us poor mortals. But Love was born to be the enemy of age, and shuns the very sight of senility, clinging always to his like in the company of youth, because he is young himself.

"I agreed with most of Phædrus' speech, but not with his suggestion that Love was older than even Kronos or Iapetus. No, gentlemen; Love, in his imperishable youth, is, I repeat, the youngest of them all. And as for those old stories of the gods we have read in Hesiod and Parmenides, we may be sure that any such proceedings were the work not of Love but of Necessity—if, indeed, such tales are credible at all. For if Love had been among them then, they would neither have fettered nor gelded one another; they would have used no violence at all, but lived together in peace and concord as they do to-day, and as they have done since Love became their heavenly overlord.

"It is clear, then, that he is young, and not only young but dainty, with a daintiness that only a Homer could describe. For it is Homer, is it not, who writes of Ate as being both divine and dainty—dainty of foot, that is. 'How delicate,' he says :

How delicate her feet who shuns the ground,  
Stepping a-tiptoe on the heads of men.

Now, you will agree that to prefer what is soft to what is hard is proof enough of being dainty; and the same argument will demonstrate the daintiness of Love; for he never treads upon the ground, nor even on our heads—which, after all, are not so very soft—but lives and moves in the softest thing in the whole of nature. He makes the dispositions and the hearts of gods and men his dwelling-place; not, however, without discrimination; for if the heart he lights upon be hard he flies

away to settle in a softer. And so, not only treading on but altogether clinging to the softest of the soft, he must indeed be exquisitely dainty.

"We see, then, that Love is for one thing the youngest, and for another the most delicate, thing in the world: and thirdly, gentlemen, we find that he is tender and supple. For if he were hampered by the least inflexibility, how could he wind us in such endless convolutions, and steal into all our hearts so secretly; aye, and leave them, too, when he pleases? And that elegance of his which all the world confesses bears witness to his suppleness and symmetry; for Love and unsightliness will never be at peace. Moreover, his life among the flowers argues in himself a loveliness of hue; for Love will never settle upon bodies, or souls, or anything at all where there is no bud to blossom, or where the bloom is faded; but where the ground is thick with flowers and the air with scent, there he will settle, gentlemen, and there he loves to linger.

"I shall say no more about Love's loveliness—though much remains to say—because we must now consider his moral excellence, and in particular the fact that he is never injured by, nor ever injures, either god or man; for, whatever Love may suffer, it cannot be by violence—which, indeed, cannot so much as touch him; nor does he need to go to work by force, for the world asks no compulsion, but is glad to serve him; and, as we know, a compact made in mutual good-will is held to be just and binding by the sovereign power of the law.

"Added to his righteousness is his entire temperance. I may take it, I suppose, for granted that temperance is defined as the power to control our pleasures and our lusts, and that none of these is more powerful than Love. If, therefore, they are weaker, they will be overcome by Love, and he will be their master; so that Love, controlling, as I said, our lusts and pleasures, may be regarded as temperance itself.

"Then, as to valour: as the poet sings:

But him not even Ares can withstand.

For, as the story goes, it was not Ares that captured Love, but Love that captured Ares—love, that is, of Aphrodite. Now, the captor is stronger than the captive; and therefore Love, by overcoming one who is mightier than all the rest, has shown himself the mightiest of all.

“So much, gentlemen, for the righteousness of Love, his temperance, and his valour; there remains his genius, to which I must do such scanty justice as I can. First of all, then—if, like Eryximachus, I may give pride of place to my own vocation—Love is himself so divine a poet that he can kindle in the souls of others the poetic fire; for no matter what dull clay we seemed to be before, we are every one of us a poet when we are in love. We need ask no further proof than this that Love is a poet deeply versed in every branch of what I may define succinctly as creative art; for, just as no one can give away what he has not got, so no one can teach what he does not know. 197

“And who will deny that the creative power by which all living things are begotten and brought forth is the very genius of Love? Do we not, moreover, recognize that in every art and craft the artist and the craftsman who work under the direction of this same god achieve the brightest fame, while those that lack his influence grow old in the shadow of oblivion? It was longing and desire that led Apollo to found the arts of archery, healing, and divination—so he, too, was a scholar in the school of Love; it was thus that the fine arts were founded by the Muses, the smithy by Hephestus, and the loom by Pallas; and thus it was that Zeus himself attained the ‘governance of gods and men.’ And hence the actions of the gods were governed by the birth of Love—love, that is, of beauty; for, as we know, he will have none of ugliness. We are told, as I have already said, that in the beginning there were many strange and terrible happenings among them, because Necessity was king; but ever since the birth of the younger god, Love—the love of what is lovely—has showered every kind of blessing upon gods and men.

“And so I say, Phædrus, that Love, besides being in

himself the loveliest and the best, is the author of those very virtues in all around him. And now I am stirred to speak in numbers, and to tell how it is he that brings

Peace upon earth ; the breathless calm  
That lulls the long-tormented deep ;  
Rest to the winds ; and that sweet balm  
And solace of our nature, sleep.

And it is he that banishes estrangement and ushers friendship in ; it is he that unites us in such friendly gatherings as this, presiding at the table, at the dance, and at the altar ; cultivating courtesy and weeding out brutality ; lavish of kindness and sparing of malevolence ; affable and gracious ; the wonder of the wise, the admiration of the gods ; the despair of him that lacks, and the happiness of him that has ; the father of delicacy, daintiness, elegance, and grace, of longing and desire ; heedful of the good and heedless of the bad ; in toil or terror, in drink or dialectic, our helmsman and helper, our pilot and preserver ; the richest ornament of heaven and earth alike ; and, to conclude, the noblest and the loveliest of leaders, whom every one of us must follow, raising our voices in harmony with the heavenly song of Love that charms both mortal and immortal hearts.

“ And there, my dear Phædrus,” he said, “ you have my speech ; such is my offering to the god of Love. I have done my best to be at once amusing and instructive.”

198 Agathon took his seat, continued Aristodemus, amid a burst of applause, for we all felt that his youthful eloquence did honour to himself as well as to the god. Then Socrates turned to Eryximachus and said : “ Well, Eryximachus, you laughed at my misgivings, but you see—they’ve been justified by the event. There’s not much left for *me* to say after the wonderful speech we’ve just had from Agathon.”

“ I admit,” Eryximachus replied, “ that your prognosis was correct so far as Agathon’s eloquence was concerned ; but as to your own embarrassment, I’m not so sure.”



"My dear sir," protested Socrates, "what chance have I or any one of knowing what to say, after listening to such a flood of eloquence as that? The opening, I admit, was nothing out of the way, but when he came to his peroration, why, he held us all spell-bound with the sheer beauty of his diction: while I, personally, was so mortified when I compared it with the best that I could ever hope to do, that for two pins I'd have tried to sneak away. Besides, his speech reminded me so strongly of that master of rhetoric, Gorgias, that I couldn't help thinking of Odysseus, and his fear that Medusa would rise from the lower world among the ghosts; and I was afraid that when Agathon got near the end he would arm his speech against mine with the Gorgon's head of Gorgias' eloquence, and strike me as dumb as stone.

"And then I saw what a fool I'd been to agree to take part in this eulogy of yours; and, what was worse, to claim a special knowledge of the subject, when, as it turned out, I had not the least idea how this or any other eulogy should be conducted. I had imagined in my innocence that one began by stating the facts about the matter in hand, and then proceeded to pick out the most attractive points and display them to the best advantage. And I flattered myself that my speech would be a great success, because I knew the facts. But the truth, it seems, is the last thing the successful eulogist cares about; on the contrary, what he does is simply to run through all the attributes of power and virtue, however irrelevant they may be; and the whole thing may be a pack of lies, for all it seems to matter.

"I take it then that what we undertook was to flatter, rather than to praise, the god of Love; and that's why you're all prepared to say the first thing about him that comes into your heads, and to claim that he either is, or is the cause of, everything that is loveliest and best. And of course the uninitiated are impressed by the beauty and grandeur of your encomiums; yet those who know will not be taken in so easily. Well then, I repeat, the whole thing was a misunderstanding, and it was only in my ignorance that

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I agreed to take part at all. I protest, with Euripides' Hippolytus, it was my lips that promised, not my soul; and that, gentlemen, is that. I won't have anything to do with your eulogy; and what is more, I couldn't if I tried. But I don't mind telling you the truth about Love, if you're interested; only, if I do, I must tell it in my own way; for I'm not going to make a fool of myself, at my age, trying to imitate the grand manner that sits so well on the rest of you. Now, Phædrus, it's for you to say: have you any use for a speaker who only cares whether his matter is correct and leaves his manner to take care of itself?"

Whereupon Phædrus and the others told him to go ahead and make whatever kind of speech he liked.

"Very well," said he; "but there's just one other thing: has our chairman any objection to my asking Agathon a few simple questions? I want to make certain we're not at cross-purposes before I begin my speech."

"Ask what you like," said Phædrus; "I don't mind."

Whereupon Socrates began, so far as Aristodemus could trust his memory, as follows:

"I must say, my dear Agathon, that the remarks with which you prefaced your speech were very much to the point. You were quite right in saying that the first thing you had to do was to acquaint us with the nature of the god, and the second to tell us what he did. Yes, your introduction was admirable. But now that we've had the pleasure of hearing your magnificent description of Love, there's just one little point I'm not quite clear about. Tell me; do you think it is the nature of Love to be the love of somebody, or of nobody? I don't mean, is he a mother's or a father's love?—that would be a silly sort of question: but suppose I were to ask you whether a father, as a father, must be *somebody's* father, or not; surely the only reasonable answer would be that a father must be the father of a son or a daughter; am I right?"

"Why, yes," said Agathon.

"And could we say the same thing about a mother?"

"Yes."

"Good; and now, if you don't mind answering just one or two more questions, I think you'll see what I'm driving at. Suppose I were to ask: what about a brother, as a brother? Must he be *somebody's* brother, or not?"

"Of course he must."

"You mean, he must be the brother of a brother or a sister."

"Precisely," said Agathon.

"Well, then," Socrates went on, "I want you to look at Love from the same point of view; is he the love of something, or of nothing?"

"Of something, naturally."

"And now," said Socrates, "bearing in mind what Love is the love of, tell me this: does he long for what he is in love with, or not?"

"Of course he longs for it."

"And does he long for whatever it is he longs for, and is he in love with it, when he's got it, or when he hasn't?"

"When he hasn't got it, probably."

"Then isn't it probable," said Socrates, "or rather isn't it certain that everything longs for what it lacks; and that nothing longs for what it doesn't lack? I can't help thinking, Agathon, that that's about as certain as anything could be. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I suppose it is."

"Good. Now, tell me: is it likely that a big man will want to be big; or a strong man to be strong?"

"Not if we were right just now."

"Quite; for the simple reason that neither of them would be lacking in that particular respect."

"Exactly."

"For if," Socrates continued, "the strong were to long for strength, and the swift for swiftness, and the healthy for health—for I suppose it *might* be suggested that in such cases as these people long for the very things they have, or are, already; and so I'm trying to imagine such a case, to make quite sure we're on the right track—people in their position, Agathon, if you

stop to think about them, are bound here and now to have those very qualities, whether they want them or not; so why should they trouble to want them? And so, if we heard someone saying, 'I'm healthy, and I want to be healthy; I'm rich, and I want to be rich; and in fact I want just what I've got,' I think we should be justified in saying, 'But, my dear sir, you've got wealth and health and strength already, and what you want is to go on having them, for at the moment you've got them whether you want them or not. Doesn't it look as if, when you say, "I want these things here and now," you really mean, "What I've got now, I want to go on keeping"? Don't you think, my dear Agathon, that he'd be bound to agree?'

"Why, of course he would," said Agathon.

"Well, then," continued Socrates, "desiring to secure something to oneself for ever may be described as loving something which is not yet to hand."

"Certainly."

"And therefore, whoever feels a want is wanting something which is not yet to hand; and the object of his love and of his desire is whatever he isn't, or whatever he hasn't got—that is to say, whatever he is lacking in."

"Absolutely."

"And now," said Socrates, "are we agreed upon the following conclusions?—One, that Love is always the love of something; and two, that that something is what he lacks."

"Agreed," said Agathon.

201 "So far, so good," said Socrates; "and now, do you remember what you said were the objects of Love, in your speech just now? Perhaps I'd better jog your memory. I fancy it was something like this: that the actions of the gods were governed by the love of beauty—for of course there was no such thing as the love of ugliness. Wasn't that pretty much what you said?"

"It was," said Agathon.

"No doubt you were right, too," said Socrates; "and if that's so, doesn't it follow that Love is the love of beauty, and not of ugliness?"

"It does."

"And haven't we agreed that Love is the love of something which he hasn't got, and consequently lacks?"

"Yes."

"Then Love has no beauty, but is lacking in it?"

"Yes, that must follow."

"Well then, would you suggest that something which lacked beauty and had no part in it was beautiful itself?"

"Certainly not."

"And, that being so, can you still maintain that Love is beautiful?"

To which Agathon could only reply: "I begin to be afraid, my dear Socrates, that I didn't know what I was talking about."

"Never mind," said Socrates, "it was a lovely speech; but there's just one more point: I suppose you hold that the good is also beautiful?"

"I do."

"Then, if Love is lacking in what is beautiful, and if the good and the beautiful are the same, he must also be lacking in what is good."

"Just as you say, Socrates," he replied; "I'm afraid you're quite unanswerable."

"No, no, dear Agathon: it's the truth you find unanswerable, not Socrates. And now I'm going to leave you in peace, because I want to talk about some lessons I was given, once upon a time, by a Mantinean woman called Diotima; a woman who was deeply versed in this and many other fields of knowledge. It was she who brought about a ten years' postponement of the great plague of Athens on the occasion of a certain sacrifice; and it was she who taught me the philosophy of Love. And now I am going to try to connect her teaching—as well as I can without her help—with the conclusions that Agathon and I have just arrived at. Like him, I shall begin by stating who and what Love is, and go on to describe his functions; and I think the easiest way will be to adopt Diotima's own method of inquiry, by question and answer. I'd been telling her pretty much

what Agathon has just been telling me—how Love was a great god, and how he was the love of what is beautiful; and she used the same arguments on me that I've just brought to bear on Agathon to prove that, on my own showing, Love was neither beautiful nor good.

"Whereupon: 'My dear Diotima,' I asked, 'are you trying to make me believe that Love is bad and ugly?'

'Heaven forbid,' she said; 'but do you really think that if a thing isn't beautiful it's therefore bound to be ugly?'

202 'Why, naturally.'

'And that what isn't learned must be ignorant? Have you never heard of something which comes between the two?'

'And what's that?'

'Don't you know,' she asked, 'that holding an opinion which is in fact correct, without being able to give a reason for it, is neither true knowledge—how can it be knowledge without a reason?—nor ignorance—for how can we call it ignorance when it happens to be true? So may we not say that a correct opinion comes midway between knowledge and ignorance?'

'Yes,' I admitted, 'that's perfectly true.'

'Very well, then,' she went on, 'why must you insist that what isn't beautiful is ugly, and that what isn't good is bad? Now, coming back to Love: you've been forced to agree that he is neither good nor beautiful; but that's no reason for thinking that he must be bad and ugly. The fact is that he's between the two.'

'And yet,' I said, 'it's generally agreed that he's a great god.'

'It all depends,' she said, 'on what you mean by "generally"; do you mean simply people that don't know anything about it; or do you include the people that do?'

'I mean everybody.'

"At which she laughed, and said: 'Then can you tell me, my dear Socrates, how people can agree that he's a great god when they deny that he's a god at all?'

'What people do you mean?' I asked her.

'You for one, and I for another.'

'What on earth do you mean by that?'

'Oh, it's simple enough,' she answered. 'Tell me: wouldn't you say that all the gods were happy and beautiful? Or would you suggest that any of them were neither?'

'Good heavens, no!' said I.

'And don't you call people happy when they possess the beautiful and the good?'

'Why, of course.'

'And yet you agreed just now that Love lacks, and consequently longs for, those very qualities?'

'Yes, so I did.'

'Then, if he has no part in either goodness or beauty, how can he be a god?'

'I suppose he can't be,' I admitted.

'And now,' she said, 'haven't I proved that you're one of the people who don't believe in the divinity of Love?'

'Yes, but what can he be, then,' I asked her—'a mortal?'

'Not by any means.'

'Well, what then?'

'What I told you before—half-way between mortal and immortal.'

'And what do you mean by that, Diotima?'

'A very powerful spirit, Socrates: and spirits, you know, are half-way between god and man.'

'What powers have they, then?' I asked.

'They are the envoys and interpreters that ply between heaven and earth, flying upwards with our worship and our prayers, and descending with the heavenly answers and commandments; and since they are between the two estates they weld both sides together and merge them into one great whole. They form the medium of the prophetic arts, of the priestly rites of sacrifice, initiation, and incantation, of divination and of sorcery; for the divine will not mingle directly with the human, and it is only through the mediation of the spirit-world that man can have any intercourse, whether waking or sleeping, with the gods. And the man who is versed in such matters is said to have spiritual powers, as opposed to the mechanical

powers of the man who is expert in the more mundane arts. There are many spirits, and many kinds of spirits, too; and Love is one of them.'

'Then who were his parents?' I asked.

'I'll tell you,' she said, 'though it's rather a long story. On the day of Aphrodite's birth the gods were making merry, and among them was Resource, the son of Craft; and when they had supped, Need came begging at the door because there was good cheer inside. Now, it happened that Resource, having drunk deeply of the heavenly nectar—for this was before the days of wine—wandered out into the garden of Zeus and sank into a heavy sleep; and Need, thinking that to get a child by Resource would mitigate her penury, lay down beside him and in time was brought to bed of Love. So Love became the follower and servant of Aphrodite because he was begotten on the same day that she was born; and further, he was born to love the beautiful since Aphrodite is beautiful herself.

'Then again, as the son of Resource and Need, it has been his fate to be always needy; nor is he delicate and lovely as most of us believe, but harsh and arid, barefoot and homeless, sleeping on the naked earth, in doorways, or in the very streets beneath the stars of heaven, and always partaking of his mother's poverty. But, secondly, he brings his father's resourcefulness to his designs upon the beautiful and the good; for he is gallant, impetuous, and energetic, a mighty hunter, and a master of device and artifice; at once desirous and full of wisdom, a lifelong seeker after truth, an adept in sorcery, enchantment, and seduction.

'He is neither mortal nor immortal; for in the space of a day he will be now, when all goes well with him, alive and blooming, and now dying, to be born again by virtue of his father's nature, while what he gains will always ebb away as fast. So Love is never altogether in or out of need; and stands, moreover, midway between ignorance and wisdom. You must understand that none of the gods are seekers after truth: they do not long for wisdom, because they are wise—and why  
204 should the wise be seeking the wisdom that is already



theirs? Nor, for that matter, do the ignorant seek the truth or crave to be made wise; and indeed, what makes their case so hopeless is that, having neither beauty, nor goodness, nor intelligence, they are satisfied with what they are, and do not long for the virtues they have never missed.'

'Then tell me, Diotima,' I said, 'who are these seekers after truth, if they are neither the wise nor the ignorant?'

'Why, a schoolboy,' she replied, 'could have told you that, after what I've just been saying; they are those that come between the two, and one of them is Love. For wisdom is concerned with the loveliest of things; and Love is the love of what is lovely; and so it follows that Love is a lover of wisdom: and, being such, he is placed between wisdom and ignorance—for which his parentage also is responsible, in that his father is full of wisdom and resource, while his mother is devoid of either.

'Such, my dear Socrates, is the spirit of Love, and yet I'm not altogether surprised at your idea of him, which was, judging by what you said, that Love was the beloved rather than the lover. So naturally you thought of Love as utterly beautiful; for the beloved is, in fact, beautiful, perfect, delicate, and prosperous—very different from the lover, as I have described him.'

'Very well, dear lady,' I replied; 'no doubt you're right. But in that case, what good can Love be to humanity?'

'That's just what I'm coming to, Socrates,' she said. 'So much, then, for the nature and the origin of Love; you were right in thinking that he was the love of what is beautiful. But suppose someone were to say: "Yes, my dear Socrates; quite so, my dear Diotima; but what do you mean by the love of what is beautiful?—or, to put the question more precisely: What is it that the lover of the beautiful is longing for?"'

'He is longing to make the beautiful his own,' I said.

'Very well,' she replied; 'but your answer leads to another question: What will he gain by making the beautiful his own?'

"This as I had to admit, was more than I could answer on the spur of the moment.

'Well, then,' she went on, 'suppose that, instead of the beautiful, you were being asked about the good. I put it to you, Socrates: What is it that the lover of the good is longing for?'

'To make the good his own.'

'Then what will he gain by making it his own?'

'I can make a better shot at answering that,' I said: 'he'll gain happiness.'

205 'Right,' said she; 'for the happy are happy inasmuch as they possess the good; and since there's no need for us to ask why men should want to be happy, I think your answer is conclusive.'

'Absolutely,' I agreed.

'This longing, then,' she went on, 'this love—is it common to all mankind? What do you think: do we all long to make the good our own?'

'Yes,' I said, 'as far as that goes we're all alike.'

'Well then, Socrates, if we say that everybody always loves the same thing, does that mean that everybody is in love?—or do we mean that some of us are in love, while some of us are not?'

'I was a little worried about that myself,' I confessed.

'Oh, it's nothing to worry about,' she assured me: 'you see, what we've been doing is to give the name of Love to what is only one single aspect of it; we make just the same mistake, you know, with a lot of other names.'

'For instance . . . ?'

'For instance, poetry. You'll agree that there is more than one kind of poetry in the true sense of the word—that is to say, calling something into existence that was not there before; so that every kind of artistic creation is poetry, and every artist is a poet.'

'True.'

'But all the same,' she said, 'we don't call them all poets, do we? We give various names to the various arts, and only call the one particular art that deals with music and metre by the name that should be given to

them all: and that's the only art that we call poetry, while those who practise it are known as poets.'

'Quite.'

'And that's how it is with Love. For "Love, that renowned and all-beguiling power," includes every kind of longing for happiness and for the good. Yet those of us who are subject to this longing in the various fields of business, athletics, philosophy, and so on, are never said to be in love, and are never known as lovers; while the man who devotes himself to what is only one of Love's many activities is given the name that should apply to all the rest as well.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I suppose you must be right.'

'I know it has been suggested,' she continued, 'that lovers are people who are looking for their other halves; but as I see it, Socrates, Love never longs for either the half or the whole of anything except the good; for men will even have their hands and feet cut off if they are once convinced that those members are bad for them. Indeed I think we only prize our own belongings in so far as we say that the good belongs to us, and the bad to someone else; for what we love is the good and nothing but the good. Or do you disagree?' 206

'Good heavens, no!' I said.

'Then may we state categorically that men are lovers of the good?'

'Yes,' I said, 'we may.'

'And shouldn't we add that they long for the good to be their own?'

'We should.'

'And not merely to be their own but to be their own for ever?'

'Yes, that must follow.'

'In short, that Love longs for the good to be his own for ever?'

'Yes,' I said, 'that's absolutely true.'

'Very well, then; and that being so, what course will Love's followers pursue, and in what particular field will eagerness and exertion be known as Love; in fact, what is this activity? Can you tell me that, Socrates?'

'If I could, my dear Diotima,' I retorted, 'I shouldn't

be so much amazed at *your* grasp of the subject; and I shouldn't be coming to you to learn the answer to that very question.'

'Well, I'll tell you, then,' she said; 'to love is to bring forth upon the beautiful, both in body and in soul.'

'I'm afraid that's too deep,' I said, 'for my poor wits to fathom.'

'I'll try to speak more plainly, then. We are all of us prolific, Socrates, in body and in soul; and when we reach a certain age our nature urges us to procreation. Nor can we be quickened by ugliness, but only by the beautiful. Conception, we know, takes place when man and woman come together; but there's a divinity in human propagation, an immortal something in the midst of man's mortality which is incompatible with any kind of discord; and ugliness is at odds with the divine, while beauty is in perfect harmony. In propagation, then, beauty is the goddess of both fate and travail; and so when procreancy draws near the beautiful it grows genial and blithe, and birth follows swiftly on conception. But when it meets with ugliness it is overcome with heaviness and gloom, and turning away it shrinks into itself and is not brought to bed, but still labours under its painful burden. And so, when the procreant is big with child, he is strangely stirred by the beautiful, because he knows that beauty's tenant will bring his travail to an end. So you see, Socrates, that Love is not exactly a longing for the beautiful, as you suggested.'

'Well, what is it, then?'

'A longing not for the beautiful itself, but for the conception and generation that the beautiful effects.'

'Yes. No doubt you're right.'

207 'Of course I'm right,' she said. 'And why all this longing for propagation? Because this is the one deathless and eternal element in our mortality. And since we have agreed that the lover longs for the good to be his own for ever, it follows that we are bound to long for immortality as well as for the good—which is to say that Love is a longing for immortality.'

"So much I gathered, gentlemen, at one time and another from Diotima's dissertations upon Love. And then one day she asked me:

'Well, Socrates, and what do you suppose is the cause of all this longing and all this Love? Haven't you noticed what an extraordinary effect the breeding instinct has upon both animals and birds; and how obsessed they are with the desire, first to mate, and then to rear their litters and their broods; and how the weakest of them are ready to stand up to the strongest in defence of their young, and even die for them; and how they are content to bear the pinch of hunger and every kind of hardship, so long as they can rear their offspring? With men,' she went on, 'you might put it down to the power of reason; but how can you account for Love's having such remarkable effects upon the brutes? What do you say to that, Socrates?'

"Again I had to confess my ignorance.

'Well,' she said, 'I don't know how you can hope to master the philosophy of Love, if *that's* too much for you to understand.'

'But, my dear Diotima,' I protested; 'as I said before, that's just why I'm asking you to teach me—because I realize how ignorant I am. And I'd be more than grateful if you'd enlighten me as to the cause not only of this, but of all the various effects of Love.'

'Well,' she said, 'it's simple enough, so long as you bear in mind what we agreed was the object of Love. For here, too, the principle holds good that the mortal does all it can to put on immortality; and how can it do that except by breeding, and thus ensuring that there will always be a younger generation to take the place of the old?'

'Now, although we speak of an individual as being the same so long as he continues to exist in the same form, and therefore assume that a man is the same person in his dotage as in his infancy; yet, for all we call him the same, every bit of him is different, and every day is he becoming a new man, while the old man is ceasing to exist, as you can see from his hair, his flesh, his bones, his blood, and all the rest of his body.

And not only his body : for the same thing happens to his soul ; and neither his manners, nor his disposition, nor his thoughts, nor his desires, nor his pleasures, nor his sufferings, nor his fears are the same throughout his life, for some of them grow, while others disappear.

‘And the application of this principle to human  
208 knowledge is even more remarkable; for not only do some of the things we know increase, while some of them are lost, so that even in our knowledge we are not always the same, but the principle applies as well to every single branch of knowledge. When we say we are studying, we really mean that our knowledge is ebbing away; we forget, because our knowledge disappears; and we have to study so as to replace what we are losing, so that the state of our knowledge may seem, at any rate, to be the same as it was before.

‘This is how every mortal creature perpetuates itself; it cannot, like the divine, be still the same throughout eternity; it can only leave behind new life to fill the vacancy that is left in its species by obsolescence. This, my dear Socrates, is how the body and all else that is temporal partakes of the eternal; there is no other way. And so it is no wonder that every creature prizes its own issue, since the whole creation is inspired by this love, this passion for immortality.’

‘Well, Diotima,’ I said, when she had done; ‘that’s a most impressive argument. I wonder if you’re right.’

‘Of course I am,’ she said with an air of authority that was almost professorial: ‘think of the ambitions of your fellow-men, and though at first they may strike you as upsetting my argument, you’ll see how right I am if you only bear in mind that men’s great incentive is the love of glory, and that their one idea is

To win eternal mention in the deathless roll of fame.

‘For the sake of fame they will dare greater dangers, even, than for their children; they are ready to spend their money like water and to wear their fingers to the bone; and, if it comes to that, to die. Do you think,’ she went on, ‘that Alcestis would have laid down her life to save Admetus, or that Achilles would have died

for the love he bore Patroclus, or that Codrus, the Athenian king, would have sacrificed himself for the seed of his royal consort, if they had not hoped to win "the deathless name for valour," which, in fact, posterity has granted them? No, Socrates, no. Every one of us, no matter what he does, is longing for the endless fame, the incomparable glory that is theirs; and the nobler he is, the greater his ambition, because he is in love with the eternal.

'Well then,' she went on, 'those whose procreancy is of the body turn to woman as the object of their love, and raise a family, in the blessed hope that by doing so they will keep their memory green, "through time and through eternity." But those whose procreancy is of 209 the spirit rather than of the flesh—and they are not unknown, Socrates—conceive and bear the things of the spirit. And what are they? you ask. Wisdom and all her sister virtues: it is the office of every poet to beget them, and of every artist whom we may call creative.

'Now, by far the most important kind of wisdom,' she went on, 'is that which governs the ordering of society, and which goes by the names of justice and moderation. And if any man is so closely allied to the divine as to be teeming with these virtues even in his youth, and if, when he comes to manhood, his first ambition is to be begetting, he too, you may be sure, will go about in search of the loveliness—and never of the ugliness—on which he may beget. And hence his procreant nature is attracted by a comely body rather than an ill-favoured one; and if, besides, he happens on a soul which is at once beautiful, distinguished, and agreeable, he is charmed to find so welcome an alliance; it will be easy for him to talk of virtue to such a listener, and to discuss what human goodness is and how the virtuous should live—in short, to undertake the other's education.

'And, as I believe, by constant association with so much beauty, and by thinking of his friend when he is present and when he is away, he will be delivered of the burden he has laboured under all these years; and what is more, he and his friend will help each other rear the

issue of their friendship—and so the bond between them will be more binding, and their communion even more complete, than that which comes of bringing children up, because they have created something lovelier and less mortal than human seed.

‘And I ask you, who would not prefer such fatherhood to merely human propagation, if he stopped to think of Homer, and Hesiod, and all the greatest of our poets; who would not envy them their immortal progeny, their claim upon the admiration of posterity? Or think of Lycurgus, she went on, and what offspring he left behind him in his laws, which proved to be the saviours of Sparta and, perhaps, the whole of Hellas. Or think of the fame of Solon, the father of Athenian law; and think of all the other names that are remembered in Grecian cities and in lands beyond the sea for the noble deeds they did before the eyes of all the world, and for all the diverse virtues that they fathered. And think of all the shrines that have been dedicated to them in memory of their immortal issue; and tell me if you can of any *one* whose mortal children have brought him so much fame.

210 ‘Well now, my dear Socrates, I have no doubt that even you might be initiated into these, the more elementary mysteries of Love; but I don’t know whether you could apprehend the final revelation, for so far, you know, we are only at the bottom of the true scale of perfection. Never mind,’ she went on, ‘I will do all I can to help you understand, and you must strain every nerve to follow what I’m saying.

‘Well then,’ she began, ‘the candidate for this initiation cannot, if his efforts are to be rewarded, begin too early to devote himself to the beauties of the body. First of all, if his preceptor instructs him as he should, he will fall in love with the beauty of one individual body, so that his passion may give life to noble discourse. Next he must consider how nearly related the beauty of any one body is to the beauty of any other, when he will see that if he is to devote himself to loveliness of form it will be absurd to deny that the beauty of each and every body is the same. Having reached this point, he must set



himself to be the lover of every lovely body, and bring his passion for the one into due proportion by deeming it of little or of no importance.

'Next he must grasp that the beauties of the body are as nothing to the beauties of the soul; so that wherever he meets with spiritual loveliness, even in the husk of an unlovely body, he will find it beautiful enough to fall in love with and to cherish: and beautiful enough to quicken in his heart a longing for such discourse as tends towards the building of a noble nature. And from this he will be led to contemplate the beauty of laws and institutions; and when he discovers how nearly every kind of beauty is akin to every other he will conclude that the beauty of the body is not, after all, of so great moment.

'And next, his attention should be diverted from institutions to the sciences, so that he may know the beauty of every kind of knowledge; and thus, by scanning beauty's wide horizon, he will be saved from a slavish and illiberal devotion to the individual loveliness of a single boy, a single man, or a single institution; and, turning his eyes towards the open sea of beauty, he will find in such contemplation the seed of the most fruitful discourse and the loftiest thought, and reap a golden harvest of philosophy; until, confirmed and strengthened, he will come upon one single form of knowledge, the knowledge of the beauty I am about to speak of. And here,' she said, 'you must follow me as closely as you can.

'Whoever has been initiated so far in the mysteries of Love and has viewed all these aspects of the beautiful in due succession, is at last drawing near the final revelation. And now, Socrates, there bursts upon him that wondrous vision which is the very soul of the beauty he has toiled so long for. It is an everlasting loveliness <sup>211</sup> which neither comes nor goes, which neither flowers nor fades; for such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now, here as there, this way as that way, the same to every worshipper as it is to every other.

'Nor will his vision of the beautiful take the form of a face, or of hands, or of anything that is of the flesh; it

will be neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is, but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness; while every lovely thing partakes of it in such sort that, however much the parts may wax and wane, it will be neither more nor less, but still the same inviolable whole.

'And so, when his prescribed devotion to boyish beauties has carried our candidate so far that the universal beauty dawns upon his inward sight, he is almost within reach of the final revelation. And this is the way, the only way, he must approach, or be led towards, the sanctuary of Love: starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung, that is, from one to two, and from two to *every* lovely body; from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions; from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself: until at last he comes to know what beauty is.

'And if, my dear Socrates,' Diotima went on, 'man's life is ever worth the living, it is when he has attained this vision of the very soul of beauty. And once you have seen it, you will never be seduced again by the charm of gold, of dress, of comely boys or lads just ripening to manhood; you will care nothing for the beauties that used to take your breath away and kindle such a longing in you, and many others like you, Socrates, to be always at the side of the beloved and feasting your eyes upon him; so that you would be content, if it were possible, to deny yourself the grosser necessities of meat and drink, so long as you were with him.

'But if it were given to man to gaze on beauty's very self—unsullied, unalloyed, and freed from the mortal taint that haunts the frailer loveliness of flesh and blood—if, I say, it were given to man to see the heavenly beauty face to face, would you call *his*,' she asked me, 'an unenviable life, whose eyes had been opened to the

vision, and who had gazed upon it in true contemplation until it had become his own for ever? And remember,' she said, 'that it is when he looks upon beauty's visible presentment, and only then, that a man will be quickened with the true, and not the seeming, virtue—for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect virtue, he shall be called the friend of god: and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him.'

"This, Phædrus—this, gentlemen—was the doctrine of Diotima. I was convinced: and in that conviction I try to bring others to the same creed, and to convince them that, if we are to make this gift our own, Love will help our mortal nature more than all the world. And this is why I say that every man of us should worship the god of Love; and this is why I cultivate and worship all the elements of Love myself, and bid others do the same; and all my life I shall pay the power and the might of Love such homage as I can. So you may call this my eulogy of Love, Phædrus, if you choose; if not, well, call it what you like."

Socrates took his seat amid applause from every one but Aristophānes, who was just going to take up the reference Socrates had made to his own theories, when suddenly there came a knocking at the outer door, followed by the notes of a flute and the sound of festive brawling in the street.

"Go and see who it is," said Agathon to the servants. "If it's one of our particular friends you can ask him in, but if not, you'd better say the party's over and there's nothing left to drink."

Well, it wasn't long before they could hear Alcibiades shouting in the courtyard, evidently very drunk, and demanding where Agathon was, because he *must* see Agathon at once. So the flute-girl and some of his other followers helped him stagger in, and there he stood in the doorway, with a mass of ribbons and an enormous wreath of ivy and violets sprouting on his head, and addressed the company.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said; "I'm pretty

well screwed already, so if you'd rather I didn't join the party, only say the word and I'll go away, as soon as I've hung this wreath on Agathon's head—which is what I really came for. I couldn't get along yesterday, so here I am to-night, with a bunch of ribbons on my head, all ready to take them off and put them on the head of the cleverest, the most attractive, and, I may say—well, any way, I'm going to crown him. And now I suppose  
213 you're laughing at me, just because I'm drunk. Go on, have your laugh out, don't mind me; I'm not so drunk that I don't know what I'm saying, and you can't deny it's true. Well, what do you say, gentlemen? Can I come in on that footing? And shall we all have a drink together; or shan't we?"

At that they all cheered and told him to come in and make himself at home, while Agathon gave him a more formal invitation. And while his people helped him in he started pulling off the ribbons, so that he could transfer them to Agathon's head as soon as he was near enough. As it happened, the wreath slipped over his eyes and he didn't notice Socrates, although he sat down on the same couch, between him and Agathon—for Socrates had made room for him as soon as he came in. So down he sat, with a "how d'you do!" to Agathon, and began to tie the ribbons round his head.

Then Agathon said to the servants: "Here, take off Alcibiades' shoes, so that we can all three make ourselves comfortable."

"Yes, do," said Alcibiades; "but just a minute, who's the third?" And when he turned round and saw who it was, he leapt out of his seat and cried:

"Well I'll be damned! You again, Socrates! So that's what you're up to, is it?—The same old game of lying in wait and popping out at me when I least expect you. Well, what's in the wind to-night? And what do you mean by sitting *here*, and not by Aristophanes or one of these other humorists? Why make such a point of sitting next to the handsomest man in the room?"

"I say, Agathon," said Socrates, "I'll have to ask you to protect me. You know, it's a dreadful thing to be in love with Alcibiades. It's been the same ever since

I fell in love with him : I've only got to look at any one who's in the least attractive, or say a single word to them, and he flies into a fit of jealous fury, and calls me the most dreadful names, and behaves as if it was all he could do to keep his hands off me. So I hope you'll keep an eye on him, in case he tries to do me an injury. If you can get him to be friends, so much the better ; but if you can't, and if he gets violent, you'll really have to protect me—for I shudder to think what lengths he might go to in his amorous transports."

"Friends with *you*?" said Alcibiades. "Not on your life ! I'll be getting my own back on you one of these days ; but at the moment—Agathon, give me back some of those ribbons, will you ? I want to crown Socrates' head as well—and a most extraordinary head it is. I don't want him to say I wreathed a garland for Agathon and none for him, when *his* words have been too much for all the world—and all his life too, Agathon, not just the other day, like yours."

So saying, he crowned Socrates' head with a bunch of ribbons, and took his seat again.

"And now, gentlemen," he said, as he settled himself on the couch, "can I be right in thinking that you're sober ? I say, you know, we can't have this ! Come on ; drink up ! You promised to have a drink with me. Now, I'll tell you, there's no one fit to take the chair at this meeting—until you've all got reasonably drunk—but me. Come on, Agathon, tell them to bring out something that's worth drinking out of ; no, never mind," he went on ; "here, you, just bring me that wine-cooler, will you ?" (which he saw would hold a couple of quarts or so). He made them fill it up, and <sup>214</sup> took the first drink himself, after which he told them to fill it again for Socrates, and remarked to the others :

"But I shan't get any change out of *him*. It doesn't matter *how* much you make him drink, it never makes him drunk."

Meanwhile the servant had filled the wine-cooler up for Socrates and he had his drink ; but here Eryximachus broke in :

"Is this the way to do things, Alcibiades ?" he asked.

"Is there to be no grace before we drink? Are we to pour the wine down our throats like a lot of thirsty savages?"

"Why, there's Eryximachus," said Alcibiades; "the noblest, soberest father's soberest, noblest son, what?—Hallo, Eryximachus!"

"Hallo yourself," said Eryximachus. "Well, what do you say?"

"What do *you* say?" retorted Alcibiades; "we have to take *your* orders, you know. What's the tag?—'A good physician's more than all the world.' So let's have your prescription."

"Here it is, then," said Eryximachus. "Before you came in we had arranged for each of us in turn, going round from left to right, to make the best speech he could in praise of Love. Well, we've all had our turn; so since you've had your drink without having made a speech I think it's only right that you should make it now. And then, when you've finished, you can tell Socrates to do whatever you like and he can do the same to the next man on his right, and so on all the way round."

"That's a very good idea, Eryximachus," said Alcibiades, "only you know it's hardly fair to ask a man that's more than half-cut already to compete with a lot of fellows who are practically sober. And another thing, my dear Eryximachus; you mustn't believe a word of what Socrates has just been telling you. Don't you see that it's just the other way round? It's him that can't keep his hands off *me* if he hears me say a good word for any one—god or man—but him."

"Oh, do be quiet," said Socrates.

"You can't deny it," retorted Alcibiades; "god knows I've never been able to praise any one else in front of you."

"Now there's a good idea," said Eryximachus; "why don't you give us a eulogy of Socrates?"

"Do you really mean that?" asked Alcibiades. "Do you think I ought to, Eryximachus? Shall I go for him, and let you all hear me get my own back?"

"Here, I say," protested Socrates; "what are you

up to now? Do you want to make me look a fool with this eulogy, or what?"

"I'm simply going to tell the truth—you won't mind that, will you?"

"Oh, of course," said Socrates, "you may tell the truth; in fact I'll go so far as to say you must."

"Then here goes," said Alcibiades; "there's one thing, though: if I say a word that's not the solemn truth I want you to stop me right away and tell me I'm a liar—but I promise you it won't be my fault if I do. On the other hand, you mustn't be surprised if I tell them about you just as it comes into my head, and jump from one thing to another; you can't expect any one that's as drunk as I am to give a clear and systematic account of all *your* eccentricities."

"Well, gentlemen, I propose to begin my eulogy of Socrates with a simile. I expect he'll think I'm making fun of him; but, as it happens, I'm using this particular simile not because it's funny, but because it's true. What he reminds me of more than anything is one of those little Silenuses that you see on the statues' stalls; you know the ones I mean—they're modelled with pipes or flutes in their hands, and when you open them down the middle there are little figures of the gods inside. And then again, he reminds me of Marsyas the satyr."

"Now I don't think even you, Socrates, will have the face to deny that you *look* like them; but the resemblance goes deeper than that, as I'm going to show. You're quite as impudent as a satyr, aren't you? If you plead not guilty I can call witnesses to prove it. And aren't you a piper as well? I should think you were; and a far more wonderful piper than Marsyas, who had only to put his flute to his lips to bewitch mankind. It can still be done, too, by any one who can play the tunes he used to play; why, there wasn't a note of Olympus' melodies that he hadn't learnt from Marsyas. And whoever plays them, from an absolute virtuoso to a twopenny-halfpenny flute-girl, the tunes will still have a magic power, and by virtue of their own divinity they will show which of us are fit subjects for divine initiation.

"Now the only difference, Socrates, between you and Marsyas is that you can get just the same effect without any instrument at all; with nothing but a few simple words, not even poetry. Besides, when we listen to any one else talking, however eloquent he is, we don't really care a damn what he says; but when we listen to you, or to someone else repeating what you've said, even if he puts it ever so badly, and never mind whether the person who's listening is man, woman, or child, we're absolutely staggered and bewitched. And speaking for myself, gentlemen, if I wasn't afraid you'd tell me I was completely bottled, I'd swear on oath what an extraordinary effect his words have had on me—and still do, if it comes to that. For the moment I hear him speak I am smitten with a kind of sacred rage, worse than any Corybant, and my heart jumps into my mouth and the tears start into my eyes—oh, and not only me, but lots of other men.

216 "Yes, I've heard Pericles and all the other great orators, and very eloquent I thought they were; but they never affected me like that; they never turned my whole soul upside down and left me feeling as if I were the lowest of the low; but this latter-day Marsyas, here, has often left me in such a state of mind that I've felt I simply couldn't go on living the way I did—now, Socrates, you can't say that isn't true—and I'm convinced that if I were to listen to him at this very moment I'd feel just the same again: I simply couldn't help it. He makes me admit that while I'm spending my time on politics I am neglecting all the things that are crying for attention in myself. So I just refuse to listen to him—as if he were one of those sirens, you know—and get out of earshot as quick as I can, for fear he keeps me sitting listening till I'm positively senile.

"And there's one thing I've never felt with anybody else—not the kind of thing you'd expect to find in me, either—and that is a sense of shame. Socrates is the only man in the world that can make me feel ashamed. Because there's no getting away from it, I know I ought to do the things he tells me to; and yet the moment I'm out of his sight I don't care what I do to keep in with



the mob. So I dash off like a runaway slave, and keep out of his way as long as I can : and then next time I meet him I remember all that I had to admit the time before, and naturally I feel ashamed. There are times when I'd honestly be glad to hear that he was dead ; and yet I know that if he did die I'd be more upset than ever—so I ask you, what is a man to do?

“ Well, that's what this satyr does for me, and plenty like me, with his pipings ; and now let me show you how apt my comparison was in other ways, and what extraordinary powers he has got. Take my word for it, there's not one of you that really knows him ; but now I've started on him, I'll show him up. Notice, for instance, how Socrates is attracted by good-looking people, and how he hangs around them, positively gaping with admiration. Then again, he loves to appear utterly uninformed and ignorant—isn't that like Silenus? Of course it is. Don't you see that it's just his outer casing, like those little figures I was telling you about? But believe me, friends and fellow-drunks, you've only got to open him up and you'll find him so full of temperance and sobriety that you'll hardly believe your eyes. Because, you know, he doesn't really care a row of pins about good looks—on the contrary, you can't think how much he looks down on them—or money, or any of the honours that most people care about. He doesn't care a curse for anything of that kind, or for any of us either—yes, I'm telling you—and he spends his whole life playing his little game of irony, and laughing up his sleeve at all the world.

“ I don't know whether anybody else has ever opened him up when he's been being serious, and seen the little images inside ; but I saw them once, and they looked so god-like, so golden, so beautiful, and so utterly amazing, that there was nothing for it but to do exactly what he told me. I used to flatter myself that he was smitten with my youthful charms, and I thought this was an extraordinary piece of luck because I'd only got to be a bit accommodating and I'd hear everything he had to say—I tell you, I'd a pretty high opinion of my own attractions. Well, I thought it over, and then, instead

of taking a servant with me as I always used to, I got rid of the man, and went to meet Socrates by myself. Remember, I'm bound to tell you the whole truth and nothing but the truth; so you'd all better listen very carefully, and Socrates must pull me up if I begin telling lies.

"Well, gentlemen, as I was saying, I used to go and meet him, and then, when we were by ourselves, I quite expected to hear some of those sweet nothings that lovers whisper to their darlings when they get them alone—and I liked the idea of that. But not a bit of it! He'd go on talking just the same as usual till it was time for him to go; and then he said goodbye and went.

"So then I suggested we should go along to the gymnasium and take a bit of exercise together, thinking that something was bound to happen there. And, would you believe it, we did our exercises together and wrestled with each other time and again, with not a soul in sight, and still I got no further. Well, I realized that there was nothing to be gained in *that* direction, but having put my hand to the plough I wasn't going to look back till I was absolutely certain how I stood; so I decided to make a frontal attack. I asked him to dinner; just as if I were the lover trying to seduce his beloved, instead of the other way round. It wasn't easy, either, to get him to accept, but in the end I managed to.

"Well, the first time he came he thought he ought to go as soon as we'd finished dinner, and I was too shy to stop him. But next time, I contrived to keep him talking after dinner, and went on far into the night, and then, when he said he must be going, I told him it was much too late and pressed him to stay the night with me. So he turned in on the couch beside me—where he'd sat at dinner—and the two of us had the room to ourselves.

"So far I've said nothing I need blush to repeat in any company; but you'd never have heard what I'm going to tell you now if there wasn't something in the proverb: 'Drunkards and children tell the truth'—drunkards any way. Besides, having once embarked on my eulogy of Socrates it wouldn't be fair not to tell you about the arrogant way he treated me. People say, you know, that when

a man's been bitten by a snake he won't tell anybody what it feels like except a fellow-sufferer, because no one else would sympathize with him if the pain drove him into making a fool of himself—well, that's just how I feel, only I've been bitten by something much more poisonous than a snake; in fact, mine is the most painful kind of bite there is. I've been bitten in the heart, or the mind, or whatever you like to call it, by Socrates' philosophy, which clings like an adder to any young and gifted mind it can get hold of, and does exactly what it likes with it. And looking round me, gentlemen, I see Phædrus, and Agathon, and Eryximachus, and Pausanias, and Aristodemus, and Aristophanes, and all the rest of them; to say nothing of Socrates himself; and every one of you has had his taste of this philosophic frenzy, this sacred rage; so I don't mind telling *you* about it because I know you'll make allowances for me—both for the way I behaved with Socrates and for what I'm saying now. But the servants must put their fingers in their ears; and so must anybody else who's liable to be at all profane or beastly.

“Well then, gentlemen, when the lights were out and the servants had all gone, I made up my mind to stop beating about the bush and tell him what I thought point-blank. So I nudged him and said :

‘Are you asleep, Socrates?’

‘No, I'm not,’ he said.

‘Then do you know what I think?’ I asked.

‘Well, what?’

‘I think,’ I said, ‘you're the only lover I've ever had who's been really worthy of me; only you're too shy to talk about it. Well, this is how I look at it: I think it'd be just as absurd to refuse you *this* as anything else you wanted that belonged to me or any of my friends. If there's one thing I'm keen on it's to make the best of myself, and I think you're more likely to help me there than anybody else; and I'm sure I'd find it harder to justify myself to men of sense for refusing to accommodate a friend of that sort than to defend myself to the vulgar if I *had* been kind to him.’

“He heard me out, and then said with that ironic

simplicity of his : ' My dear Alcibiades, I've no doubt there's a lot in what you say, if you're right in thinking that I have some kind of power that would make a better man of you ; because in that case you must find me so extraordinarily beautiful that your own attractions must be quite eclipsed. And if you're trying to barter your own beauty for the beauty you have found in me, you're driving a very hard bargain, let me tell you : you're trying to exchange the semblance of beauty for the thing  
 219 itself—like Diomedes and Glaucus swopping bronze for gold. But you know, my dear fellow, you really must be careful ; suppose you're making a mistake, and I'm not worth anything at all. The mind's eye begins to see clearly when the outer eyes grow dim—and I fancy yours are still pretty keen.'

" To which I replied : ' Well, I've told you exactly how I feel about it, and now it's for you to settle what's best for us both.'

' That sounds reasonable enough,' he said ; ' we must think it over one of these days, and do whatever seems best for the two of us—about this and everything else.'

" Well, by this time I felt that I had shot my bolt ; and I'd a pretty shrewd idea that I'd registered a hit. So I got up, and, without giving him a chance to say a word, I wrapped my own cloak round him—for this was in the winter—and, creeping under his shabby old mantle, I took him in my arms and lay there all night with this god-like and extraordinary man—you can't deny that, either, Socrates. And after *that* he had the insolence, the infernal arrogance, to laugh at my youthful beauty and jeer at the one thing I was really proud of, gentlemen of the jury—I say ' jury ' because that's what you're here for, to try the man Socrates on the charge of arrogance—and believe it, gentlemen, or believe it not, when I got up next morning I had no more *slept* with Socrates, within the meaning of the act, than if he'd been my father or an elder brother.

" You can guess what I felt like after *that* : I was torn between my natural humiliation and my admiration for his manliness and self-control, for this was strength of mind such as I had never hoped to meet. And so I

couldn't take offence and cut myself off from his society ; but neither was there any way I could think of to attract him. I knew very well that I'd no more chance of getting at him with money than I had of getting at Ajax with a spear ; and the one thing I'd made sure would catch him had already failed. So I was at my wits' end, and went about in a state of such utter subjection to the man as was never seen before.

" It was after all this, you must understand, that we were both sent on active service to Potidæa, where we messed together. Well, to begin with, he stood the hardships of the campaign far better than I did, or any one else, for that matter. And if—and it's always liable to happen when there's fighting going on—we were cut 220 off from our supplies, there was no one who put such a good face on it as him. But on the other hand, when there was plenty to eat he was the one man who really seemed to enjoy it ; and though he didn't drink for choice, if we ever pressed him to he'd beat the lot of us ; and, what's the most extraordinary thing of all, there's not a man living that's ever seen Socrates drunk. And I dare say he'll have a chance to show what he's made of before *this* party's over.

" Then again, the way he got through that winter was most impressive ; and the winters over there are pretty shocking. There was one time when the frost was harder than ever, and all the rest of us stayed inside, or if we did go out we wrapped ourselves up to the eyes and tied bits of felt and sheepskins over our shoes ; but Socrates went out in the same old coat he'd always worn, and made less fuss about walking on the ice in his bare feet than we did in our shoes. So much so, that the men began to look at him with some suspicion and actually took his toughness as a personal insult to themselves.

" Well, so much for that ; and now I must tell you about another thing ' Our valiant hero dared and did ' in the course of the same campaign. He started wrestling with some problem or other about sunrise one morning, and stood there lost in thought ; and when the answer wouldn't come he still stood there thinking and refused

to give it up. Time went on, and by about midday the troops noticed what was happening, and naturally they were rather surprised and began telling each other how Socrates had been standing there thinking ever since daybreak. And at last, towards nightfall, some of the Ionians brought out their bedding after supper—this was in the summer, of course—partly because it was cooler in the open air, and partly to see whether he was going to stay there all night. Well, there he stood till morning, and then at sunrise he said his prayers to the sun and went away.

“And now I expect you’d like to hear what kind of a show he made when we went into action; and I certainly think you ought to know. They gave me a decoration after one engagement, and do you know, Socrates had saved my life, absolutely single-handed; I’d been wounded and he refused to leave me; and he got me out of it, too, armour and all. And as you know, Socrates, I went straight to the General Staff and told them *you* ought to have the decoration; and you can neither deny that nor blame me for doing it. But the authorities thought they’d rather give it to me, because of my family connections and so forth, and you were even keener than they were that I should have it instead of you.

221 “And then, gentlemen, you should have seen him when we were in retreat from Delium. I happened to be in the cavalry, while he was serving with the line. Our people were falling back in great disorder and he was retreating with Laches when I happened to catch sight of them; I shouted to them not to be downhearted and promised to stand by them. And this time I’d a better chance of watching Socrates than I’d had at Potidæa—you see, being mounted, I wasn’t quite so frightened. And I noticed for one thing how much cooler he was than Laches, and for another how—to borrow from a line of yours, Aristophanes—he was walking with the same ‘lofty strut and sideways glance’ that he goes about with here in Athens. His ‘sideways glance’ was just as unconcerned whether he was looking at his own friends or at the enemy; and you could see from half a mile away that if you tackled *him* you’d get

as good as you gave—with the result that he and Laches both got clean away; for you're generally pretty safe if that's the way you look when you're in action; it's the man whose one idea it is to get away that the other fellow goes for.

"Well, there's a lot more to be said about Socrates, all very peculiar and all very much to his credit. No doubt there's just as much to be said about any of his little ways, but personally I think the most amazing thing about him is the fact that he is absolutely unique; there's no one like him, and I don't believe there ever was. You could point to some likeness to Achilles in Brasidas and the rest of them; you might compare Nestor and Antenor, and so on, with Pericles; there are plenty of such parallels in history; but you'll never find any one like Socrates, or any ideas like his ideas, in our own times or in the past—unless, of course, you take a leaf out of my book and compare him, not with human beings, but with Silenuses and satyrs; and the same with his ideas.

"Which reminds me of a point I missed at the beginning; I should have explained how his arguments, too, were exactly like those Silenuses that open down the middle. Any one listening to Socrates for the first time would find his arguments simply laughable; he wraps them up in just the kind of expressions you'd expect of such an insufferable satyr. He talks about pack-asses and blacksmiths and shoemakers and tanners; and he always seems to be saying the same old thing in just the same old way, so that any one who wasn't used to his style and wasn't very quick on the uptake would naturally take it for the most utter nonsense. But if you open up 222 his arguments, and really get into the skin of them, you'll find that they're the only arguments in the world that have any sense at all; and that nobody else's are so god-like, so rich in images of virtue, or so peculiarly, so entirely pertinent to those inquiries that help the seeker on his way to the goal of true nobility.

"And there, gentlemen, you have my eulogy of Socrates, with a few complaints thrown in about the unspeakable way he's treated me. I'm not the only one,

either; there's Charmides, and Euthydemus, and ever so many more; he's made fools of them all, just as if he were the beloved, not the lover. Now, Agathon, I'm telling you this for your own good, so that you'll know what to look out for; and I hope you'll learn from our misfortunes, and not wait for your own to bring it home to you, like the poor fool in the adage."

As Alcibiades took his seat there was a good deal of laughter at his frankness; especially as he seemed to be still in love with Socrates; but the latter said:

"I don't believe you're as drunk as you make out, Alcibiades, or you'd never have given the argument such a subtle twist and obscured the real issue; what you were really after—though you only slipped it in casually towards the end—was to make trouble between me and Agathon, so that I as your lover, and he as your beloved, should both belong to you and nobody else. But you can't humbug me; I can see what you're getting at with all this satyr and Silenus business. I only hope, Agathon, my dear, that he won't succeed; and I hope you'll be very careful not to let anybody come between us."

"I'm inclined to think you're right, Socrates," said Agathon; "remember how he sat down in the middle so as to keep us apart. But I'll come round and sit next to you: so that won't help him very much."

"Yes, do," said Socrates; "come round the other side."

"Oh, god!" cried Alcibiades; "look what I have to put up with! He's determined to drive me off the field. All the same, Socrates, I think you might let Agathon sit in the middle."

"Oh, no," said Socrates, "that would never do. Now you've finished singing my praises, I've got to do the same by the next man on my right; so you see, if he sat next to you, he'd have to start eulogizing me before he'd had my eulogy of him. So be a good chap and let  
223 the boy alone; you mustn't grudge him the praise I'm going to give him, because I'm dying to start my eulogy."

"Aha!" cried Agathon; "you don't catch me staying



here much longer, Alcibiades; I shall certainly change places if it means a tribute from Socrates."

"Oh, it's always the same," said Alcibiades bitterly; "no one else gets a look-in with the beauties when Socrates is there. Look how easily he trumped up an excuse for Agathon to sit beside him."

And then, all of a sudden, just as Agathon was getting up to go and sit by Socrates, a whole crowd of revellers came to the door; and finding it open, as someone was just going out, they marched straight in and joined the party. No sooner had they sat down than the whole place was in an uproar; decency and order went by the board, and everybody had to drink the most enormous quantities of wine. By this time Eryximachus and Phædrus and some of the others were beginning to leave, so Aristodemus told me; while he himself fell off to sleep.

He slept on for some time, for this was in the winter and the nights were long; and when at last he woke it was near daybreak and the cocks were crowing. He noticed that all the others had either gone home or fallen asleep, except Agathon and Aristophanes and Socrates, who were still awake and drinking out of an enormous bowl which they kept passing round from left to right. Socrates was arguing with the others; not that Aristodemus could remember very much of what he said, for, besides having missed the beginning, he was still more than half-asleep; but the gist of it was that Socrates was forcing them to admit that the same man might be capable of writing both comedy and tragedy—that the tragic poet might be a comedian as well.

But as he clinched the argument, which the other two were scarcely in a state to follow, they began to nod; and first Aristophanes fell off to sleep and then Agathon, as day was breaking. Whereupon Socrates tucked them up comfortably and went away, followed, of course, by Aristodemus: and after calling at the Lyceum for a bath, he spent the rest of the day as usual; and then, towards evening, made his way home to rest.

## THE MENO

### PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE

St. *Meno, Socrates, A Servant Boy of Meno's, Anytus.*

II.

SCENE.—*The Lycæum.*

p.

70 *Meno.* CAN you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is to be taught; or whether it is acquired, not through teaching, but through exercise and habit; or whether it comes neither by exercise, nor yet by teaching, but is by nature with those who are possessed of it; or comes it to them by some other way?

*Socrates.* You Thessalians, Meno, have been of old eminent among the Grecians. You have been long admired for your superior skill in horsemanship, and famed for the great wealth you are possessed of. But I think you have now acquired no less fame for wisdom. And amongst others of you, the fellow-citizens of your friend Aristippus of Larissa have distinguished themselves not a little in this respect. Now this is entirely the work of Gorgias. For in his travels, when he came to their city, he drew the chiefs of the Aleuadian family (one of whom is your friend Aristippus), and indeed all of highest quality in other states of Thessaly, to be the admirers of his wisdom. From him you Thessalians learned the habit of answering to any question whatever with an undaunted and a noble confidence, such indeed as becomes those who have a thorough knowledge of the subject proposed to them. For he in the same manner offered himself to be freely interrogated by any one of the Grecians, whom it should please to ask him, concerning any point which the party questioning might choose: and to no question of any person did he ever refuse an answer. But we in this place, my friend Meno, are in a condition quite the contrary. Amongst  
71 us there is a dearth, as it were, of wisdom; which seems

to have forsaken our country, and to have fled to yours. So that if you should take it into your head to propose to any one here the question you have proposed to me, there is not a man of us who would not laugh and say, "Friend stranger, you must think me wonderfully wise, to know whether virtue is a thing which can be taught, or by what other means it is attained : when I am so far from knowing whether it can be taught or not, that I have not the good fortune to know so much as what virtue is." Now this, Meno, is exactly my own case. I am in the same poverty of knowledge as to this affair, and confess myself to be totally ignorant concerning the essence of virtue. How then should I be able to say what qualities are to be attributed to that which is utterly unknown to me? Or do you think it possible for a man, wholly ignorant who Meno is, to know whether Meno is a man of honour, a man of fortune, a man of generous spirit, or whether he is the reverse of all these characters? Do you think it possible?

*Meno.* I do not. But in good earnest, Socrates, do you really not know what virtue is? and do you give me leave to carry home such a character of you, and to make this report of you in my country?

*Socrates.* Not only that, my friend, but this further—that I never met anywhere with a man whom I thought master of such a piece of knowledge.

*Meno.* Did you never then meet with Gorgias, during his stay in this city?

*Socrates.* I did.

*Meno.* And did you think that he knew nothing of the matter?

*Socrates.* I do not perfectly remember, Meno, and therefore am not able to say directly what I then thought of him. But perhaps not only was he himself knowing in the nature of virtue, but what he used to say on that subject you also know. Do you then remind me what account he gave of virtue; or, if you are unwilling so to do, give me an account of it yourself; for I suppose you agree with him in opinion.

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* Let us leave him. therefore, out of the

question, especially considering that he is absent. But what you yourself think virtue to be, tell me, Meno, and freely communicate your knowledge of it, that I may be happy in being convicted of having uttered what is so happily an untruth, when I said that I never anywhere met with a man who knew what virtue was; when, at the same time, both yourself and Gorgias shall appear to have been so well acquainted with the nature of it.

*Meno.* Whatever you may imagine, Socrates, it is by no means difficult to tell you what you desire to know. In the first place, to instance in the virtue of a man, nothing is easier to tell than that a man's virtue consists in his ability to manage affairs of state, and, in managing them, to be of service to the public and to its friends, to distress its enemies, and to guard, at the same time, with vigilance and circumspection, against any harm that might arise from those enemies in their turn. Then, if you would know what is the virtue of a woman, it is easy enough to run over the particulars: it is to manage well the affairs of her family, carefully to keep safe all that is in the house, and to hearken with due observance to her husband. Another kind of virtue belongs to a child, different too in a girl from what it is in a boy: so is it likewise of the aged. And if you choose to proceed further, the virtue of a free man is one thing, that of a  
72 slave is another thing. Many more virtues are there, of all sorts; so that one cannot be at a loss to tell, concerning virtue, what it is. For in every action, and in every age of life, with reference to every kind of business, some peculiar virtue belongs to each person: and in vice also, I suppose, Socrates, there is the same respective difference, and the same variety.

*Socrates.* I think myself much favoured by Fortune, Meno; for, when I was only in quest of one virtue, I have found, it seems, a whole swarm of virtues hiving in your mind. But, to pursue this similitude, taken from bees:—Supposing, Meno, I had asked you what was the nature of a bee, and you had told me that bees were many and various, what would you have answered me if I had demanded of you further, whether you called them many and various, and differing one from another,

in respect of their being bees; or whether you thought they differed not in this respect, but with regard to something else, as beauty, or size, or other thing of like kind, accidental? What answer would you have made to such a question?

*Meno.* I should have answered thus; that so far as they were bees, and in this respect, they differed not at all one from another.

*Socrates.* Suppose, then, that I had afterwards said, Tell me, therefore, Meno, concerning this very nature of bees, in respect of which they do not differ, but all agree and are alike; what say you that it is? Should you have had any answer to have given me to this question?

*Meno.* I should.

*Socrates.* Just so is it with the virtues. Many indeed are they, and of various kinds: but they all agree in one and the same idea; through their agreement in which they are, all of them alike, virtues. This idea the man, who is asked the question which I have asked of you, ought to have in his eye when he answers it; and, copying from this idea, to draw a description of virtue. Do you not apprehend the meaning of what I say?

*Meno.* Tolerably well, I think I do. But I am not in the possession of it so fully as I could wish.

*Socrates.* Take it thus then.—Do you think after this manner concerning virtue only, that the virtue of a man is one thing, the virtue of a woman another thing, and so of other respective virtues, that they are all different? or have you the same way of thinking as to the health, size, and strength of the body? Do you think the health of a man to be one thing, the health of a woman to be a thing different? or is the same idea of health everywhere, wherever health is, whether it be in a man, or in whatever subject it be found?

*Meno.* The health of a man and the health of a woman, I think, are equally and alike health, one and the same thing.

*Socrates.* Do you not think after the same manner with regard to size and strength; that a woman, if she be strong, is strong according to the same idea, and with

the same strength, which gives a strong man the denomination of strong? By the same strength I mean this, that whether strength be in a man, or in a woman, considering it as strength, there is no difference; or do you think that there is any difference between strength and strength?

*Meno.* I think there is not any.

*Socrates.* And will any difference, think you then, be  
73 found in virtue, with respect to its being virtue, whether it be in a child or in an aged person, in a woman or in a man?

*Meno.* This case of virtue, Socrates, seems somehow to be not exactly parallel with those other instances.

*Socrates.* Why? Did you not tell me that the virtue of a man consisted in his well-managing of civil affairs, and that of a woman in the well-managing of her household?

*Meno.* I did.

*Socrates.* I ask you, then, whether it is possible to manage any affairs well, whether civil or domestic, or any other affairs whatever, without a prudent and a just management?

*Meno.* By no means.

*Socrates.* If then the management be just and prudent, must not the managers manage with justice and with prudence?

*Meno.* They must.

*Socrates.* Both of them, therefore, have occasion for the same things, to qualify them for being good managers, both the woman and the man, namely, justice and prudence.

*Meno.* It appears they have.

*Socrates.* And how is it in the case of a child, or that of an old man? Can these ever be good, if they are dissolute and dishonest?

*Meno.* By no means.

*Socrates.* But only by their being sober and honest?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* All persons, therefore, who are good, are good in the same way; for they are good by being possessed of the same qualities.

*Meno.* It seems so.

*Socrates.* Now if virtue were not the same thing in them all, they would not be good in the same way.

*Meno.* They would not.

*Socrates.* Seeing, therefore, that virtue is the same thing in all of them, endeavour to recollect and tell me, what was the account given of it by Gorgias, which was the same, it seems, with the account you would give of it yourself?

*Meno.* What else is it than to be able to govern men? If you are in search of that, which is one and the same thing in all persons who have virtue.

*Socrates.* It is the very thing I am in search of. But is this then the virtue of a child, Meno? And is it the virtue of a slave, to be able to govern his master? Do you think him to be any longer a slave, when he can govern?

*Meno.* I think he is then by no means a slave indeed, Socrates.

*Socrates.* Neither is it proper, my friend, that he should be so. Consider this also further. You say it is virtue to be able to govern. Should we not immediately subjoin the word *justly*, and say, to govern justly? For you would not say, that, to govern unjustly is virtue.

*Meno.* I think we should. For justice, Socrates, is virtue.

*Socrates.* Virtue is it, Meno, or some certain virtue?

*Meno.* How mean you by this distinction?

*Socrates.* I mean no otherwise than as everything else whatever is distinguished: to instance, if you please, in roundness. Of this I should say that it is some certain figure, and not thus simply and absolutely that it is figure. And for this reason should I express myself in that manner, because there are other figures beside the round.

*Meno.* You would thus speak rightly. And indeed, to say the truth, I myself not only call justice a virtue, but say that other virtues there are beside.

*Socrates.* Say, what these other virtues are. As I would recount to you, were you to bid me, other figures

beside the round; do you recount to me, in like manner, other virtues beside justice.

*Meno.* Well then; courage I think to be a virtue, and temperance another, and wisdom, and magnanimity, and a great many more.

*Socrates.* Again, Meno, we have met with the same accident as before; we have again found many virtues, while in search of one only; though then indeed in a different way from that in which we have now alighted on them: but the one virtue, which is the same through all these, we are not able to find.

*Meno.* For I am not able as yet, Socrates, to apprehend such virtue as you are inquiring after, that one in all, as in other things I am able.

*Socrates.* Probably so; but I will do the best I can to help us onward in our inquiry. Already you apprehend, in some measure, that thus it is in everything. For should any person have asked you what was figure, the thing I just now mentioned, and you had said it was roundness; were he then to ask you, according to the same distinction which I made concerning justice, whether roundness was figure, or some certain figure; you would answer, it was some certain figure.

*Meno.* Without all doubt.

*Socrates.* And would you not answer thus for this reason, because there are other figures beside the round?

*Meno.* For that very reason.

*Socrates.* And were he to ask you further, of what sort those other figures were, you would tell him?

*Meno.* I should.

*Socrates.* Again; questioned in the same manner concerning colour, what it is? had you answered, It is whiteness; should the questioner immediately proceed to this further question, whether whiteness is colour, or some certain colour? you would say, Some certain colour; because there happen to be other colours.

*Meno.* I should.

*Socrates.* And if he were to bid you enumerate those other colours, you would speak of colours, which happen to be colours no less than the white.



*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* If then he were to prosecute the argument, as I do, he would say, We are always getting into multitude; deal not with me in this manner: but since to all this multitude you give one common name; since you tell me there is none of them which is not figure; and that, notwithstanding, they are contrary some to others; what is this which comprehends the round as well as the straight, this thing to which you give the name of figure, and tell me that the round is figure not more than is the straight? or do you not say this?

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* I ask you, then, whether when you say this, you mean it in respect of roundness, and that the round is not more round than is the straight? or with regard to straightness, and that the straight is not more straight than is the round?

*Meno.* I mean not thus, Socrates.

*Socrates.* But it is with a view to figure, that you assert the round not more to be figure than is the straight, nor the straight more than is the round.

*Meno.* True.

*Socrates.* Try then if you can tell me, what that thing is which is called by this general name of figure. Now suppose, that to an inquirer in this way concerning figure, or concerning colour, you were to say, I do not comprehend what it is you would have, man; nor do I know what it is you mean: he perhaps would wonder; and would say, Do you not comprehend that I am inquiring, what is the same in all these? Would you have nothing to say neither after this, Meno, were you to be asked, what that was in the round, in the straight, and in the other things you call figures, in all of them the same? Endeavour to find out and tell me what it is; that you may the better afterwards consider of, and answer to, the like kind of question concerning virtue.

*Meno.* Not so, Socrates; but do you yourself rather say what figure is.

*Socrates.* Would you have me oblige you in this point?

*Meno.* By all means.

*Socrates.* Shall you then be willing to tell me what virtue is?

*Meno.* I shall.

*Socrates.* Let us then do our best; for the cause deserves it.

*Meno.* Without all doubt.

*Socrates.* Come then; let us try if we can tell you what figure is. See if you can accept the following account of figure. Let us say, figure is that which of all things is the only one that always accompanies colour. Are you satisfied with this account? or do you inquire any further? For my part, I should be well contented if you would give me but as good an account of virtue.

*Meno.* But, Socrates, this is weak and silly.

*Socrates.* How so?

*Meno.* According to your account, that is figure which always accompanies colour.

*Socrates.* Well.

*Meno.* But should any person now reply, that he knew not what colour was, and was equally at a loss concerning colour and concerning figure, what could you think of the answer that you had given to his question?

*Socrates.* I?—that I had answered with truth. And if my questioner happened to be one of your wise men, your disputers and contenders, I would tell him, that I had spoken; and that, if I had not spoken rightly, it was his business to take up the argument, and to refute what I had said. But if two parties, such as you and I here, as friends, and in a friendly way, were inclined to have discourse together, their answers to each other's questions ought to be made in a milder manner, and to be more rational. Now it is perhaps more rational, that an answer should not only be agreeable to truth, but besides, should be conceived in terms confessedly understood by the party questioning. Accordingly, I shall now attempt to make you such a kind of answer. For tell me; do you not call some certain thing by the name of end, speaking of such a thing as bound or extreme? For by all these words I mean the same thing. Prod-

icus, indeed, might possibly dispute it with us: but you would use these expressions indifferently, that such or such a thing is bounded, or, that it has an end. This is all I mean; nothing of subtle disquisition, or nice distinction.

*Meno.* Well; there is something which I call end; and I think I understand what you mean.

*Socrates.* And is there not something which you call 76 superficies? another, which you call solid? such as those, I mean, which are the subjects of geometry.

*Meno.* I call certain things by the names you mention.

*Socrates.* Now then, from these premises which you admit, you may understand what I mean by figure in general. In every figure, that which bounds the solid, I call figure. And to express this in one short proposition, I should say that figure is the bound of solid.

*Meno.* And what say you colour is?

*Socrates.* You use me ill now, *Meno*. You put an old man to the task of answering, yet are unwilling yourself to take the trouble only of recollecting and telling me what *Gorgias* said that virtue was.

*Meno.* But I will; after you have told me what colour is.

*Socrates.* A man with his eyes hoodwinked might perceive from your way of conversing, *Meno*, that you are handsome, and still have your admirers.

*Meno.* How so?

*Socrates.* Because you do nothing but command in conversation, as fine ladies do, that are used to have their wills in all things; for they tyrannize so long as their beauty lasts. At the same time too, perhaps you have discovered me, how easy I am to be subdued by beauty, and how apt to stoop to it. I shall do therefore as you would have me, and shall answer to your question.

*Meno.* By all means do, and gratify my request.

*Socrates.* Do you choose that I should make my answer in the style of *Gorgias*, that by this means you may apprehend it the more easily?

*Meno.* I should be glad that you would do so, most undoubtedly.

*Socrates.* Do you not hold, you and Gorgias, that certain effluvia flow forth from bodies, agreeably to the doctrine of Empedocles?

*Meno.* We hold that doctrine strongly.

*Socrates.* And do you not hold certain pores, into which and through which those effluvia pass?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* And that some of those effluvia are adapted to some of these pores, but are either less or greater than other pores?

*Meno.* Things are so framed.

*Socrates.* And do you not admit of something which you call sight?

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* These premises being granted, "Now let your mind accompany my words," as Pindar says. Colour then is the flowing off from figures, commensurate with the sight, and by that sense perceived.

*Meno.* In this answer, Socrates, I think you have answered as well as possible.

*Socrates.* It may be that you think so, because you are accustomed to a language of this kind; and because at the same time you perceive yourself, as I imagine, able from thence to account in the same way for sound, and smell, and many other things of like kind.

*Meno.* It really is so.

*Socrates.* The answer, Meno, was theatrical and pompous; and so it pleased you more than that which I gave you concerning figure.

*Meno.* Indeed it did.

*Socrates.* And yet I persuade myself, O son of Alexidemus, that not this, but that other, was the better answer. I think too, that you yourself would be of the same opinion, if you are not, as you said you were yesterday, under a necessity of going away before the mysteries, but could stay and be initiated.

77 *Meno.* But if you would tell me many other things such as this, I would certainly stay and hear them.

*Socrates.* My best endeavours to say other such things shall certainly not be wanting, for my own sake as well as yours. But I fear I shall not be able to utter

many sentences of that kind. But now it comes to your turn to try if you can perform your part of the engagement, in giving me an account of what virtue is, virtue in general, the same in all particular virtues. And do not go on, making many out of one; as is often said jocosely of those who pound or beat anything to pieces. But leaving virtue as it is, whole and entire, define the nature of it, and tell me what it is. Patterns of such a definition you have had from me.

*Meno.* I think then, Socrates, that virtue is agreeably to that of the poet,

To feel a joy from what is fair,  
And [o'er it] to have power—

and accordingly I say, that virtue is this; having the desire of things that are fair, to have it in our power to gain them.

*Socrates.* I ask you then, whether you suppose the persons who desire things that are fair, to desire things that are good?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* In giving that definition of virtue then, did you suppose that some men there were who desire things which are evil, others who desire things which are good? Do you not think, my friend, that all men desire things which are good?

*Meno.* I do not.

*Socrates.* But that some desire things which are evil?

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* Think you that these men desire things evil, with an opinion of their being good? or that, knowing them to be evil, yet they nevertheless desire them?

*Meno.* I answer Yes to both those questions.

*Socrates.* Is there any man then, do you imagine, who knowing the things which are evil to be what they are, that is, evil, yet nevertheless desire them?

*Meno.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* What do you mean, when you say he desires them? Do you not mean, that he desires to have them?

*Meno.* To have them? For what can I mean besides?

*Socrates.* Does he desire them, think you, imagining that evil things are advantageous to the person who has them, or knowing that evil things are hurtful wherever they are?

*Meno.* There are persons who imagine of things which are indeed evil, that they are advantageous; and there are who know them to be hurtful.

*Socrates.* Do you think that they know the evil things to be evil, those who imagine such evil things to be advantageous?

*Meno.* By no means do I think that.

*Socrates.* Is it not then evident, that such persons desire not things evil, such as know not the nature of those things which they desire; but rather, that they desire things which they imagine to be good, but which in reality are evil? So that those who are ignorant of them, and falsely imagine them to be good, plainly desire good things. Do they not?

*Meno.* Such sort of persons, I must own, seem to be desirous of good things.

*Socrates.* But those others, those who desire things which are evil, as you say, and who at the same time know that evil things are hurtful to the possessor, do they know that they themselves shall receive harm from those evil things in their having them?

18 *Meno.* It is clear that they must know it.

*Socrates.* But know they not, that such as receive harm are in evil plight, so far as harm has befallen them?

*Meno.* This also must they know.

*Socrates.* And know they not besides, that such as are in evil plight are unhappy too?

*Meno.* I presume they do.

*Socrates.* Is there any man then, who chooses to be in evil plight, and to be unhappy?

*Meno.* I suppose there is not any, *Socrates.*

*Socrates.* No man, therefore, O *Meno*, wills or chooses anything evil; if it be true, that no man wills or chooses to be in evil plight, or to be unhappy. For indeed what else is it to be thoroughly unhappy, than to

desire things which are evil, and to have them our own?

*Meno.* I suspect that what you say, Socrates, is true. And no man wills or chooses anything evil.

*Socrates.* Did you not say just now, that virtue consisted in the willing or desiring things which are good, and in the having it in our power to gain them?

*Meno.* I did say so; it is true.

*Socrates.* Is not this will or desire according to what has been said in all men? so that, in this respect, one man is not at all better than another man?

*Meno.* It appears so.

*Socrates.* It appears, therefore, that if one man is better than another, he must be so in respect of his power.

*Meno.* Undoubtedly.

*Socrates.* This therefore, as it seems, according to your account, is virtue, the power of gaining things which are good.

*Meno.* The case seems to me, Socrates, to be entirely so, as you now state it.

*Socrates.* Let us examine then if this account of yours be true: for perhaps it may be so. You say, that to be able to gain good things is virtue.

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* Good things do you not call such things as health and riches, that is, the possession of gold and silver, honours also in the state, and offices in the government? You do not speak of any other things as good, beside things of this kind?

*Meno.* No other; I mean all such sort of things.

*Socrates.* Well then, to get money is virtue; as says Meno, the hereditary guest of the great king. But let me ask you a question concerning this point; whether you would choose to add something to this account of virtue, and to say that virtue is to get money honestly and religiously? or whether this addition makes no difference in your account; but that, however unjustly it be acquired, you call the mere acquisition of money, equally in any way, virtue?

*Meno.* By no means; for, to acquire it unjustly, I call vice and wickedness.

*Socrates.* By all means, therefore, as it appears, this acquisition of money ought to be accompanied by honesty, or prudence, or sanctity, or some other part of virtue; for otherwise it will not be virtue, notwithstanding it procures for us good things.

*Meno.* For without that how should it be virtue?

*Socrates.* And if a man forbear to gain money, whether for himself or others, when he cannot gain it without dishonesty, is not the forbearance of this gain also virtue?

*Meno.* It is apparent.

*Socrates.* Not the gaining of these good things, therefore, must be virtue, more than the forbearance of that gain; but, as it seems, that which comes accompanied by honesty is virtue; that which is without anything of that kind is vice and wickedness.

79 *Meno.* I think it must of necessity be as you say.

*Socrates.* Did we not say, a little while since, that honesty and prudence, and everything of that kind, was a part of virtue?

*Meno.* We did.

*Socrates.* Then, Meno, you are in jest with me.

*Meno.* How so, Socrates?

*Socrates.* Because, when I had desired you, as I did just now, not to split virtue into pieces, and had given you patterns to copy after, that you might answer as you ought; you, without paying any regard to them, tell me that virtue is the power of gaining good things with honesty or justice; yet this, you say, is only a part of virtue.

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* It is to be collected then, from your own concessions, that with a part of virtue, to do whatever one does, this is virtue. For justice, you say, is but a part of virtue, and so of every other thing of like kind.

*Meno.* What then? granting that I say this.

*Socrates.* It follows that, having been requested to tell me what the whole of virtue is, you are far from giving such a complete account of it: for you say, that every action is virtue which is performed with a part of virtue; as though you had already told me what virtue



was in the whole, and that I should know it when you come to split it into parts. We must therefore, as it seems to me, take the matter again from the beginning, and recur to this question, What is virtue? Or should every action, accompanied with a part of virtue, be said to be virtue itself? For it is saying this, to say that every action, accompanied with justice, is virtue.—Do you think there is no occasion for us to resume the same question; but that a man may know a part of virtue, what it is, without knowing what virtue is itself?

*Meno.* I think he cannot.

*Socrates.* For, if you remember, when I answered just now your question concerning figure, we rejected such a kind of answer as aimed at explaining the proposed subject in terms not as yet confessedly understood, but whose meaning was still the subject of inquiry.

*Meno.* And we did right, Socrates, in rejecting such an answer.

*Socrates.* I would not have you imagine then, while we are as yet inquiring what virtue is, the whole of it, that by answering in terms which signify the parts of virtue, you will be able to explain to any man the nature of virtue; or, indeed, that the nature of any other thing can be explained in such a way, but that still there will be need of repeating the same question what virtue is, that which is the subject of our conversation. Or do you think that I speak idly and nothing to the purpose?

*Meno.* I think you speak rightly.

*Socrates.* Begin again, therefore, and tell me what it is you hold virtue to be, you and your friend Gorgias?

*Meno.* Socrates, I heard, before I had conversed with you, that the only part you take in conversation is this: 80—You pretend to be at a loss and doubtful yourself upon all subjects, and make others too no less to be at a loss what to think and say. You seem to be now playing the same conjurers' tricks upon me; you manifestly use incantations to bewitch me, and to fill me with such perplexity that I know not what to say. If you will allow me to joke a little, I think you resemble exactly, not only in form but in other respects also, that broad sea-fish called the cramp-fish; for that too never fails to

give a numbness to every person who either touches or approaches it. You seem to have done some such thing at present to me, and to have benumbed me. For I actually suffer a kind of numbness and stupidity, both in mind and body, and find myself disabled from giving you any answer; and yet have I a thousand times discoursed much about virtue, and to many persons, and extremely well too, as I thought; but I am now not in the least able to tell so much as what virtue is. I think that you have acted very prudently in never going out of your own country either by sea or land. For if you was to behave in this manner in any other city where you are a stranger, you would run a risk of being driven thence as a magician or enchanter.

*Socrates.* You are full of craftiness, Meno; and I was very near being deceived by you.

*Meno.* Tell me how, Socrates, I pray you?

*Socrates.* I know with what design you brought a simile to which you likened me.

*Meno.* With what design now, do you imagine?

*Socrates.* That I, on my part, might bring some simile or resemblance of you. For this I know to be true of all handsome persons, they love to have images and pictures made of them. And indeed it is their interest; for of handsome persons the pictures are handsome too. But I shall forbear the drawing of your picture in return. And as to that which you have produced of me, if the cramp-fish be itself numb, and through its numbness benumb others also, then am I like to it, but otherwise I am not. For I do not lead others into doubtfulness on any subject, and make them be at a loss what to say; when at the same time I can easily explain the matter in hand, and have no doubts at all within my own mind: but as I am entirely distressed for true definitions of things myself; in this condition, I involve in the same distresses those with whom I am conversing. Thus at present concerning the nature of virtue; what it is, I, for my part, know not: you indeed knew formerly, perhaps, before that you had touched me; but now you are like one who knows nothing of the matter. I am desirous, however,

of considering it together with you, and of our searching out jointly what kind of a thing virtue is.

*Meno.* But in what way, Socrates, will you search for a thing of which you are entirely ignorant? For by what mark which may discover it will you look for it when you know none of the marks that distinguish it? Or, if you should not fail of meeting with it, how will you discern it, when met with, to be the very thing you was in search of, and knew nothing of before?

*Socrates.* I apprehend, Meno, what it is you mean. Do you observe how captious a way of reasoning you introduce? For it follows from hence, that it is impossible for a man to seek, either for that which he knows, or for that of which he is ignorant. For no man would seek to know what he knows, because he has the knowledge of it already, and has no need of seeking for what he has. Nor could any man seek for what he is ignorant of, because he would not know what he is seeking for.

*Meno.* Do you not think then, Socrates, that this *81* way of reasoning is fair and right?

*Socrates.* Not I, for my part.

*Meno.* Can you say in what respect it is wrong?

*Socrates.* I can. For I have heard the sayings of men and women who were wise, and knowing in divine things.

*Meno.* What sayings?

*Socrates.* Such as I think true, as well as beautiful.

*Meno.* But what sayings were they? and by whom were they uttered?

*Socrates.* Those who uttered them were of the priests and priestesses, such as made it their business to be able to give a rational account of those things in which they were employed. The same sayings are delivered also by Pindar, and many other of the poets, as many as are divine. The sayings are these; but do you consider with yourself whether you think them true. These persons then tell us that the soul of man is immortal; that sometimes it ends, which is called dying; and that afterwards it begins again, but never is dissolved; and that for this reason we ought to live; throughout our lives, with all sanctity. For

## STROPHE

When guilt of lesser crimes the soul hath stain'd,  
 Not meriting sharp pains for aye;  
 And eight dark dreary years she hath remain'd  
 In Hades, barr'd from gladd'ning day;  
 Preserving all that time her sense  
 Of good, lamenting her lost innocence,  
 With sorrow if her guilt she rue,  
 And Proserpine should deem that sorrow true,  
 She accepts in full atonement such repentance due.

## ANTISTROPHE

Then the ninth year sends back the soul to light  
 And former objects here on earth:  
 Of these, thro' death, again she loses sight:  
 Again to life renews her birth.  
 At length, two trials well endur'd,  
 The soul, to lesser virtues well inur'd,  
 Is born some king, for good renown'd;  
 Or sage, well learn'd in wisdom's lore profound;  
 Or hero, by his prowess spreading peace around.

## EPODE

Thro' goodness, wisdom, virtue, truly great;  
 And greatly meriting advancement high;  
 Loosen'd from body, wing'd and fleet,  
 Freely she mounts to purest sky;  
 Ne'er more on earth to live, ne'er more to die.  
 Amongst the gods in starry sheen,  
 Far off and wide thro' Nature seen,  
 She fixes her abode;  
 Assuming her celestial throne,  
 To godlike state of being grown,  
 A deathless demi-god.  
 Thence thro' the rest of time,  
 In hymns religious and in holy rhyme,  
 Mortals below shall lift their lays,  
 The deathless demi-god to praise;  
 Who, freed from earthly dross,  
 And ev'ry element of body gross,  
 To intellectual bliss in heav'nly seat could climb.

The soul then being immortal, having been often born, having beheld the things which are here, the things which are in Hades, and all things, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge. No wonder, therefore, that she is able to recollect, with regard to virtue as well as to other things, what formerly she

knew. For all things in nature being linked together in relationship, and the soul having heretofore known all things, nothing hinders but that any man, who has recalled to mind, or, according to the common phrase, who has learnt, one thing only, should of himself recover all his ancient knowledge, and find out again all the rest of things; if he has but courage, and faints not in the midst of his researches. For inquiry and learning is reminiscence all. We therefore ought not to hearken to that sophistical way of reasoning aforementioned; for our believing it to be true would make us idle. And, accordingly, the indolent, and such as are averse to taking pains, delight to hear it. But this other way of thinking, which I have just now given you an account of, makes men diligent, sets them at work, and puts upon them inquiry. And as I believe it to be true, I am willing, with your assistance, to inquire into the nature of virtue.

*Meno.* With all my heart, Socrates. But say you this absolutely, that we do not learn anything; and that all, which we call learning, is only reminiscence? Can you teach me to know this doctrine to be true?

*Socrates.* I observed to you before how full you are of craftiness, O Meno. And, to confirm my observation, you now ask me if I can teach you; I, who say that 82 there is no such thing as teaching, but that all our knowledge is reminiscence; that I may appear directly to contradict myself.

*Meno.* Not so, Socrates, by Jupiter. I did not express myself in those terms with any such design; but merely from habit, and the common usage of that expression. But if any way you can prove to me that your doctrine is true, do so.

*Socrates.* This is by no means an easy talk. However, for your sake, I am willing to try and do my utmost. Call hither to me then one of those your numerous attendants, which ever you please, that I may prove in him the truth of what I say.

*Meno.* I will, gladly. Come hither, you.

*Socrates.* Is he a Grecian, and speaks he the Greek language?

*Meno.* Perfectly well. He was born in my own family.

*Socrates.* Be attentive now, and observe whether he appears to recollect within himself, or to learn anything from me.

*Meno.* I shall.

*Socrates.* Tell me, boy; do you know what a square space is? Is it of such a figure as this?

*Boy.* It is.

*Socrates.* A square space then is that which has all these lines equal, A B, B C, C D, D A, four in number.

*Boy.* It is so truly.

*Socrates.* Has it not also these lines, which are drawn through the middle of it, A C and B D, equal each to the other?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Socrates.* Cannot you imagine a space, square like this, but larger; and another such, but lesser?

*Boy.* Yes, for certain.

*Socrates.* Now if the side A B should be two feet long, and the side A D should be two feet long also, how many feet square will the whole space contain? Consider it in this manner. If, in the side A B, the space should be two feet long, and in the side A D it should be but one foot; would not the square be that of two feet once told?

*Boy.* It would.

*Socrates.* But since it is two feet this way as well as the other way, is it not a space of two feet twice told?

*Boy.* Just so.

*Socrates.* It is then a space of two feet?

*Boy.* So it is.

*Socrates.* How many feet are twice two? reckon them, and tell me.

*Boy.* Four feet, Socrates.

*Socrates.* May not a space be made E F G H, double to that other in size, but of the same kind, having, like that, all its sides equal?

*Boy.* Yes, sure.

*Socrates.* How many square feet then will this space be of?

*Boy.* Eight.

*Socrates.* Come now, try and tell me, of what length is each of the sides in this square space. Now the sides of that square, you know, we have supposed to be two feet long. Of what length then are the sides of this square, which is double in largeness to that other?

*Boy.* It is plain, Socrates, that they are twice as long.

*Socrates.* You see, Meno, that I teach him none of these things which he asserts; I only ask him questions. And now this boy imagines that he knows of what length the lines are which contain a space of eight square feet. Do you not think he does?

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* And does he really know?

*Meno.* Certainly not.

*Socrates.* But he imagines them to be twice as long as the lines, which contain a space of four square feet.

*Meno.* He does.

*Socrates.* I now view him ready to recollect, from this time forward, rightly and as he ought. Now hear me, boy. You say that lines, double in length to the sides of the square A B C D, contain a space double to 8; it in largeness: I mean a space of the same kind; not one way long, the other way short; but every way of equal length, like the space A B C D, only twice as large, that is, a space of eight square feet. Consider now whether you still think this square E F G H to be measured by a line twice as long as the line which measures the square A B C D.

*Boy.* I do.

*Socrates.* Suppose we add to the line A B, from hence, from the point B, another line of equal length the line B I. Is not the line A I of a length double to that of the line A B?

*Boy.* Yes, sure.

*Socrates.* Now, from the line A I, do you say that a space will be made of eight square feet, if four lines, each of them as long as the line A I, be drawn so as to contain space?

*Boy.* I do.

*Socrates.* Let us then draw these four equal lines so as to contain space, A I, I K, K L, L A. Is this space now any other than that which you say is of eight square feet?

*Boy.* No; it is the very same.

*Socrates.* Are there not in this space A I K L these four spaces, A B M O, B I P M, M P K N, N L O M, each of which is equal to that space of four square feet, A B C D?

*Boy.* So there be.

*Socrates.* How large is the whole space A I K L? Is it not four times as large as the space A B C D?

*Boy.* To be sure it is.

*Socrates.* Is it only double now to the space A B C D, when it is four times as large?

*Boy.* No, by Jupiter.

*Socrates.* What proportion has it then to the space A B C D?

*Boy.* A quadruple one.

*Socrates.* From a line, therefore, double in length, is drawn a square space, not double, but quadruple, in largeness.

*Boy.* Why, it is very true.

*Socrates.* Four times four make sixteen: do they not?

*Boy.* They do.

*Socrates.* But from a line of what length is to be drawn a square, such a one as we suppose the square E F G H to be, that is, a space of eight square feet? You see that from the line A I is drawn a square, quadruple in largeness to the square A B C D.

*Boy.* I see it.

*Socrates.* And from the line A B, which is half of the line A I, a square, you see, is drawn, which is but the fourth part of the square A K.

*Boy.* It is.

*Socrates.* Well; but that square of eight feet E F G H, is it not twice as large as the square A B C D, and half as large as the square A I K L?

*Boy.* It is so, to be sure.



*Socrates.* Must it not then be drawn from a line longer than the line  $AB$ , and shorter than the line  $AI$ ?

*Boy.* I think it must.

*Socrates.* You say well; for speak that only which you think. And tell me, was not the line  $AB$  supposed to be two feet long, and the line  $AI$  four feet long?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Socrates.* The side therefore of the square  $EFGH$  must be shorter than a line of four feet, and longer than a line of two feet.

*Boy.* It must so.

*Socrates.* Try now, and tell me how long you think it is.

*Boy.* Three feet long.

*Socrates.* If then it be so, let us take half of the line  $BI$ , namely,  $BQ$ , and add it to the line  $AB$ ; and now this line  $AQ$  will be such a line as you speak of, a line three feet long. For the lines  $AB$ ,  $BI$ , are each of them two feet long, and the line  $BQ$  is half of the line  $BI$ , and therefore is one foot long. In the same manner, let us take half the line  $OL$ , namely,  $OR$ , and add it to the line  $AO$ ; and thus the line  $AR$  will be three feet long also. For the lines  $AO$ ,  $OL$ , are each of them two feet long, and the line  $OR$  is one foot long. From these two lines,  $AQ$ ,  $AR$ , let us complete the square  $AQSR$ ; and it is such a square as you was speaking of, the square of a line three feet long.

*Boy.* It is so.

*Socrates.* If then the whole space be three feet long and three feet broad, it is a space of thrice three feet.

*Boy.* It appears so to be.

*Socrates.* And how many feet are thrice three?

*Boy.* Nine.

*Socrates.* But how many feet were there to be in a square twice as large as the square  $ABCD$ ?

*Boy.* Eight.

*Socrates.* It is not true then that from a line three feet long is to be drawn a square containing only eight feet.

*Boy.* It is not.

*Socrates.* Try and tell us then exactly how long the line must be from which such a square is to be drawn. Or, if you choose not to tell us the measure of it in numbers, at least point out to us from what line it may be drawn.

84 *Boy.* Now, by Jove, Socrates, I do not know.

*Socrates.* Do you observe, Meno, what progress this boy has already made, and whereabouts he is, in the way to recollection? You see that, from the beginning of his examination, he knew not from what line a square eight feet large was to be drawn; as indeed neither does he yet know; but he then fancied that he knew, and answered boldly as a knowing person would, without suspecting that he should ever be at a loss for a true answer. But he now finds himself at a loss, and thinks himself as ignorant as he really is.

*Meno.* You say what is true.

*Socrates.* Is he not then in a better disposition with regard to the matter which he was ignorant of?

*Meno.* I agree with you in this too.

*Socrates.* In making him therefore to be at a loss what to answer, and in benumbing him after the manner of the cramp-fish, have we done him any harm?

*Meno.* I think, we have not.

*Socrates.* And more than this, we have advanced him a little, as it seems, in the way of finding out the truth in the subject laid before him. For, being now sensible of his ignorance, he is prepared to seek and to inquire. But he then fancied, that he could readily, at any time, and in the presence of any number of people, show with certainty, that a square, twice as large as some other square, was produced from a line twice as long.

*Meno.* So it seemed.

*Socrates.* Think you then, that he would have set about seeking or learning that, which, however ignorant of it, he fancied that he knew; till he had found himself at a loss, and felt his ignorance; and was become therefore desirous of finding it out?

*Meno.* I think, Socrates, that he never would.

*Socrates.* The benumbing him then was of advantage to him.

*Meno.* I think it was.

*Socrates.* Now observe how, from this sense of his ignorance, he will find out the truth in searching for it with me; though the part which I shall bear in the inquiry will be merely to ask questions, and not to teach. But be sure to mind, if anywhere you can catch me teaching or telling him anything, instead of asking him his own opinions. Now, boy, tell me, is not this space  $A B C D$  our square, four feet large? Do you apprehend me?

*Boy.* I do.

*Socrates.* Suppose we add to it this other square  $B T U C$ , equal to it in largeness?

*Boy.* Well.

*Socrates.* And a third square, too, this,  $D C W X$ , equal in largeness to either of the others?

*Boy.* Very well.

*Socrates.* What, if we add another square of equal size, to fill up the corner here, this  $U C W Y$ ?

*Boy.* Very well: and so it does.

*Socrates.* Are not then these four squares equal all,  $A B C D$ ,  $B T U C$ ,  $C D X W$ ,  $W Y U C$ ?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Socrates.* This whole large square then,  $A T Y X$ , how much larger is it than the square  $A B C D$ ?

*Boy.* Four times as big.

*Socrates.* But we wanted a square only twice as big. Do you not remember?

*Boy.* I remember it very well.

*Socrates.* Do not these lines, which I draw from corner to corner in each of these squares,  $B D$ ,  $B U$ ,  $D W$ ,  $W U$ , cut each square in half?

*Boy.* They do.

*Socrates.* Are not these four lines drawn of equal length, these, which enclose the square space,  $B D W U$ ?

*Boy.* They be so.

*Socrates.* Now consider, how large this square is which is enclosed by those four lines.

*Boy.* Why, I do not know.

*Socrates.* Are not those four squares.  $A B C D$

BTUC, CDXW, WYUC, cut each of them in half by these four lines, BD, BU, DW, WU, drawn within them; or are they not?

*Boy.* They be.

*Socrates.* In the square, ATYX, how many spaces are there then, as large as the space ABCD?

*Boy.* Four.

*Socrates.* And how many such in the square, BDWU, from which half the other is cut off?

*Boy.* Two.

*Socrates.* How many more are four than two?

*Boy.* Twice as many.

*Socrates.* How many square feet then doth this square, BDWU, contain?

*Boy.* Eight.

*Socrates.* From what line is it drawn?

*Boy.* From this here.

*Socrates.* From the line BD, do you say, reaching from corner to corner of the square ABCD, which contains four square feet?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Socrates.* The sophists call such a line the diameter. If the diameter then be its name, from the diameter of a square, as you say, you boy of Meno's, may be drawn a square twice as large as the square of which it is the diameter.

*Boy.* It is so, Socrates, for certain.

*Socrates.* Well; what think you, Meno? Has this boy, in his answers, given any other opinion than his own?

*Meno.* None other: he has given his own opinion only.

*Socrates.* And yet, but a little before, as we both observed, he had no knowledge of the matter proposed, and knew not how to give a right answer.

*Meno.* True.

*Socrates.* But those very opinions, which you acknowledge to be his own, were in him all the time: were they not?

*Meno.* They were.

*Socrates.* In a man therefore, who is ignorant, there

are true opinions concerning those very things of which he is ignorant.

*Meno.* It appears there are.

*Socrates.* Those opinions then are stirred up afresh in the mind of that boy, as fancies are in dreaming. And if he should frequently be questioned of these things, and by many different persons, you may be assured he will at length know them with as much certainty as any man.

*Meno.* Indeed, it seems so.

*Socrates.* Will he not then know them without being taught them, having only been asked questions, and recovering of himself from within himself his lost knowledge?

*Meno.* He will.

*Socrates.* But our recovery of knowledge from within ourselves, is not this what we call reminiscence?

*Meno.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* And this knowledge, which he now has, must he not at some time or other have acquired it, or else have always been possessed of it?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* Now if he was always possessed of it, he was always a person of knowledge. But if at any time he first received it, was it not in this present life? unless some person has taught him the science of geometry. For he will make his answers with no less certainty in every part of geometry, and indeed in all the other mathematical sciences. Is there any one, then, who has taught the boy all this? I ask you; because you ought to know, since he was born and bred up in your family.

*Meno.* I am certain that no person has ever taught him those sciences.

*Socrates.* And yet he entertains those opinions, which he has just now declared: does he not?

*Meno.* It appears, Socrates, that he must.

*Socrates.* If then he had this knowledge within him, 86 not having acquired it in this present life, it is plain that in some other time he had learnt it and actually possessed it.

*Meno.* It appears so.

*Socrates.* And was not that time then, when he was not a man?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* If true opinions then are in him, at both these times, the time when he is, and the time when he is not a man; opinions which, awakened and roused by questions, rise up into science; must not his soul be well furnished with this discipline throughout all ages? for it is plain, that in every age he either is, or is not a man.

*Meno.* In all appearance it must be so.

*Soc.* If the truth of things therefore is always in the soul, the soul should be immortal. So that whatever you happen now not to know, that is, not to remember, you ought to undertake with confidence to seek within yourself, and recall it to your mind.

*Meno.* You seem to me, Socrates, somehow or other to speak rightly.

*Socrates.* As for my own part, Meno, I would not contend very strenuously for the truth of my argument in other respects; but that in thinking it our duty to seek after the knowledge of things we are at present ignorant of, we should become better men, more manly, and less idle, than if we suppose it not possible for us to find out, nor our duty to inquire into, what we know not; this I would, if I was able, strongly, both by word and deed, maintain.

*Meno.* In this also, Socrates, you seem to me to say well.

*Socrates.* Since then we are agreed in this point, that what a man knows not, he ought to inquire after and seek to know, are you willing that we attempt jointly to inquire into the nature of virtue?

*Meno.* By all means, willing. Not but that I should have most pleasure in taking into consideration, and hearing what you have to say on the question I first asked you, whether, in setting about our inquiries concerning virtue, we should consider it as a thing that may be taught, or as being by nature with those who have it, or as attainable by some other means, and what they are.

*Socrates.* Were I to govern not only myself, Meno, but you too, we would not consider whether virtue could be taught or not, before we had inquired, in the first place, what virtue was. But since you, without so much as attempting to govern yourself, for fear (I suppose) of being less free and less a gentleman, undertake however to govern me, and actually do govern me, I shall yield to you. For indeed how can I help myself? or what is to be done without it? We are to consider then, it seems, what belongs to some certain thing, whilst yet we know not what the thing is. But if you still persist, however relax a little the strictness of your command, and suffer the question, whether virtue can be taught a man, or how otherwise it is attained, to be considered hypothetically. By hypothetically I mean in the same manner as geometers often treat a question, for instance; when they are asked concerning some geometrical figure, whether it is possible for such a particular triangle to be inscribed in such a particular circle. A geometer would answer,—I know not 87 as yet, of what kind this triangle is. But I can make a supposition, which I think may be of use in answering your question,—this;—Supposing the triangle be of such a kind, as that a circle being drawn about a given side of it, the whole space of the triangle be included within the circular space described around it, the consequence will then be one thing; but quite another consequence will follow, if it cannot be so included. Laying down therefore these two hypotheses distinctly, I can tell you what will follow, in each of these cases, as to the inscribing that triangle within the circle, whether it be impossible or possible. Now the same way shall we take in our inquiry concerning virtue: since we know not, either what it is, or what is to be attributed to it, we shall lay down an hypothesis concerning it; and, on the footing of that hypothesis, shall consider whether it is to be taught or not. Let us then state the question thus: Supposing virtue to be in that order of things which belongs to the soul, is virtue, on this hypothesis, to be taught, or not to be taught? In the first place, it is either a different kind of thing from knowledge, or a thing of the same kind with

knowledge: and on each of these hypotheses let us inquire, whether virtue is or is not to be taught, or (as we lately expressed it) recalled to mind; for whichever of these expressions we use, let it make no difference to us. The question is then, whether virtue is to be taught. Now is it not evident to every one, that man is taught no other thing than knowledge?

*Meno.* To me it seems so.

*Socrates.* If virtue, therefore, be a certain kind of knowledge, it is evident that virtue is to be taught.

*Meno.* Undoubtedly.

*Socrates.* We have quickly then dispatched this part of the inquiry; and are fairly come to this conclusion, that if virtue be a thing of the same kind with knowledge, it is to be taught; otherwise not.

*Meno.* Very true.

*Socrates.* Next after this, it seems, that we should consider whether virtue be knowledge or of a kind different from knowledge.

*Meno.* We ought, I think, in the next place to consider this.

*Socrates.* Well now; shall we suppose that virtue is a thing which is good; and shall we abide by this hypothesis, laying it down for certain that virtue is something good?

*Meno.* By all means.

*Socrates.* Now if there be also any other good separated from knowledge, then perhaps virtue may not be a certain kind of knowledge. But if there be no sort of good which is not comprehended under knowledge, then a suspicion that virtue was knowledge of a certain kind would be a just suspicion.

*Meno.* What you say is true.

*Socrates.* But further; is it not through virtue that we are good?

*Meno.* It is.

*Socrates.* And if good, then advantageous. For all things that are good are advantageous: are they not?

*Meno.* They are.

*Socrates.* Virtue then is a thing advantageous too.



*Meno.* It follows of necessity from what we just now granted.

*Socrates.* Now let us consider what sort of things those are which profit and are advantageous to us; enumerating the particulars: health, we all say, and strength, and beauty, and riches. These things and others of like kind we call advantageous: do we not?

*Meno.* We do.

*Socrates.* And say we not, that these very things are 88 sometimes hurtful to us? or do you pronounce otherwise?

*Meno.* No otherwise; I say the same.

*Socrates.* Consider now, what is the leading cause when any of these things profit us; and what when they hurt us. Is it not, when right use presides in the management of them, that they profit us, and when right use is wanting, that they hurt us?

*Meno.* Certainly so.

*Socrates.* Further then, let us consider things belonging to the soul. Do you admit that temperance is something in the soul; and so of justice, and fortitude, and docility, and memory, and magnanimity, and all things of like kind?

*Meno.* I do.

*Socrates.* Now consider such of these things, as you think not to consist in knowledge, but to be of a kind different from knowledge. Do not these procure us sometimes hurt, and sometimes advantage? for instance, fortitude; unless fortitude is not where prudence is wanting: let our instance then be boldness. When a man is bold without reason or understanding, does he not incur mischief? And when he is bold rationally and wisely, does he not gain advantage?

*Meno.* It is true.

*Socrates.* Is it not true of temperance also, and docility, that to a man who has learnt and is provided with them, if his soul at the same time be fraught with understanding, they are advantageous; but, if he wants understanding, they are hurtful?

*Meno.* Most undoubtedly.

*Socrates.* In a word, all the abilities of the soul,

whether they be of the active kind or of the passive, under the conduct of prudence, do they not tend to happiness; but managed with imprudence, do they not produce the contrary effect?

*Meno.* It is probable they do.

*Socrates.* If virtue then be one of those things belonging to the soul, and if it be of necessity, as you say, always advantageous, virtue must be prudence: for we see, that all other things belonging to the soul are of themselves neither advantageous nor hurtful; but let there be added to them imprudence or prudence, and they thus become either hurtful or advantageous. Now according to this reasoning, virtue being always advantageous, must be some kind of prudence.

*Meno.* To me it seems so.

*Socrates.* Now then as to those other things, which we said just now were sometimes beneficial and sometimes hurtful, riches, and the rest of external goods; I ask whether or no as prudence, presiding in the soul, and governing her other powers and possessions, applies them to our advantage; and as imprudence, having the lead, turns them all to mischief; whether in the same manner the soul, rightly using and administering those outward things, employs them for our benefit, but by a wrong use renders them prejudicial and pernicious?

*Meno.* Most certainly.

*Socrates.* And are not things administered and used rightly by a soul possessed of prudence; but amiss and ill by a soul possessed with folly?

*Meno.* They are.

*Socrates.* Thus then we may pronounce it to hold good universally: to man all external things depend on his soul; and all things belonging to the soul itself depend on prudence for their being good and beneficial 89 to him. Now it follows from this reasoning, that prudence is always advantageous. But did we not just now say the same of virtue too?

*Meno.* True.

*Socrates.* We conclude, therefore, that prudence is virtue; either the whole of virtue, or some part at least.

*Meno.* What has been said seems to me, Socrates, to have been well said.

*Socrates.* If then it be so, the good are not good by nature.

*Meno.* It seems to me, they are not.

*Socrates.* For then, this too would follow. If the good were good by nature we should have, somewhere or other, persons who knew which of our youth were good and virtuous in their natures; and these, when they had discovered them to us, we should take and guard in the citadel, putting our seal on them more carefully than we should on gold; that no person might corrupt them, and that when they arrived at the age of manhood, they might become useful to the state.

*Meno.* It is likely, Socrates, that in that case this would be done.

*Socrates.* Since the good, therefore, are not good by nature, whether are they good by teaching or not?

*Meno.* I think it now necessary to hold this in the affirmative. And it is plain, Socrates, that if virtue be knowledge, according to our hypothesis before, then it may be taught.

*Socrates.* Perhaps so, by Jove. But I fear we did amiss in admitting that hypothesis.

*Meno.* And yet very lately it seemed to be maintained fairly.

*Socrates.* But I suspect, it ought not only to have lately seemed to be maintained fairly, but to seem so at present, and hereafter too, if there be anything in it sound or faultless.

*Meno.* What is the matter now? in what respect do you find fault with it? and why doubt of its being true, that virtue is a kind of knowledge?

*Socrates.* I will tell you, Meno. That virtue is to be taught, supposing it to be a science, or some kind of knowledge, this position of ours I call not into question, nor have any doubt of its being true. But consider whether I appear not to have reason for doubting the truth of the supposition, that virtue is a kind of knowledge. For answer me to this question; whatever is taught, I speak not of virtue only, but of every other

subject of discipline or teaching, must there not be of necessity both teachers of it and scholars?

*Meno.* I think there must.

*Socrates.* That thing, therefore, on the contrary, of which there are neither teachers nor scholars to be found, should we not think rightly, in thinking it probable that it is not the subject of teaching?

*Meno.* True. But do you really think that no masters are to be found who teach virtue?

*Socrates.* Though I have often sought about, and inquired if there were any teachers of virtue, with my utmost endeavours I cannot find any. And yet I invite any persons to join me in the search, especially such as I might presume to have the most experience in that affair. And just now, Meno, in happy time, is this man Anytus sat down by us, who may be a party in our inquiry. And it should seem reasonable for us to make him a party :  
 90 for, in the first place, he is the son of the wealthy and the wise Anthemion, a man who is become rich, not by accident, nor yet by legacy, as he has done to whom the riches of Polycrates are now of late devolved, Ismenias of Thebes, but having acquired his wealth through his own wisdom and industry; and then as to his other good qualities, he is a citizen who is thought neither contemptuous and insolent, nor ostentatious and giving trouble to all about him, but behaves decently and conducts himself like a modest and frugal man. And besides all this, he has educated and instructed his son here excellently well, in the opinion of the Athenian multitude; for they elect him to the highest offices in the state. Such men it is right to make of our party, when we are inquiring after masters who teach virtue, whether any are to be found and who they are. Join yourself therefore, Anytus, to us, to me, and Meno here, your guest at Athens, in our inquiry concerning virtue, who are the teachers of it. And consider the question thus: Suppose this Meno had an inclination to be made a good physician, and applied to us for our advice in the affair, to what masters should we send him? should we not send him to the physicians?

*Anytus.* By all means.

*Socrates.* And to make him a good currier, should we not send him to the curriers?

*Anytus.* To be sure.

*Socrates.* And in all other subjects of instruction, should we not take the same way?

*Anytus.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* But concerning this point, let me ask you another question. In sending him to the physicians, we say we should do well, if we intended the making him a good physician. Now when we say this, do we not mean, that we should act with prudence in sending him, not to any one who profess not the art of healing, but to those who make it their profession; and who, besides, are paid for teaching it to others; and thus, by this very acceptance of pay, take upon themselves to teach any one who is willing to come and learn; I ask you whether it is not from these considerations that we should do well in sending him to the physicians?

*Anytus.* I answer, yes.

*Socrates.* In the learning music too, and every other art, are not the same considerations just? Surely it is great want of understanding in us, if we are desirous of having some person taught music, not to choose for his masters such as profess the teaching of the art, and the taking of money too for their teaching; but, instead of this, to give trouble to other people, expecting him to learn from those who do not pretend to be teachers, and have not one scholar in that learning in which we expect our student should be by them instructed. Think you not that such an expectation would be very unreasonable?

*Anytus.* I do, by Jupiter; and a great sign of ignorance too, besides.

*Socrates.* You say well. Now then you have an opportunity of considering together with me, and giving your advice about this guest of yours, Meno here. For <sup>91</sup> he has often told me long ago, Anytus, that he wished to acquire that wisdom and virtue, through which men govern well both their families and their commonwealth; through which also they behave respectfully to their parents; and know how to entertain both their country-

men and foreigners, and what presents to make them at their departure; in such a manner as becomes a good man. Were we then to recommend to him any persons from whom he might learn this virtue, consider whom we should do right in recommending. Is it not clear that, agreeably to what we have just now said in other cases, they would be those persons who profess to be teachers of virtue, and publicly through all Greece offer themselves to teach it to any one who desires to learn; fixing the price of this their teaching, and demanding it as their just fee

*Anytus.* And what persons, Socrates, do you mean?

*Socrates.* You cannot be ignorant that I speak of those who are called sophists.

*Anytus.* O Hercules! speak not so shamefully, Socrates. May none of my relations, friends, or acquaintance, fellow-citizens, or foreign guests, ever be seized with such a madness as to go and be spoiled by those men. For the bane and corruption those men are of all who follow them.

*Socrates.* How say you, Anytus? Are these the only men among those who profess the knowledge of something beneficial to human kind, so widely different from all the rest, as not only not to improve and make better what is put into their hands as the others do, but on the contrary to corrupt and spoil it? and do they think fit openly to demand fees to be paid them for so doing? I cannot tell how I should give credit to this account of yours. For I know one man in particular, Protagoras, to have acquired singly more riches from having this wisdom, than Phidias has from his works so celebrated for their beauty, together with any ten other statuarys besides. It is a prodigy what you tell me; when the menders of old shoes and of old clothes could not escape a month from being publicly known, if they returned the clothes or shoes in a worse condition than they received them; but doing so would be soon reduced to starving; yet, that Protagoras should corrupt and spoil his followers, and send them home worse men than when they first came to him, without being discovered by all Greece, and this for above forty years. For I think he

was near seventy years of age when he died, after having spent forty of them in the practice of his profession. And during all that time he maintained a high reputation, which continues even to this day. And not only Protagoras met with this success, but very many <sup>92</sup> others: some of whom were prior to him in time, and some flourish at present. Now shall we suppose that they deceived and corrupted the youth, as you say they did, knowingly? or shall we suppose they did so unconscious of it to themselves? Shall we deem them to be so much out of their senses, such men, who are said by some to be the wisest of mankind?

*Anytus.* They are far from being out of their senses, Socrates: rather so are those of the youth, who give them money for corrupting them; and still more so than these youths are their relations in committing them to the guidance of such men; but most of all so are those cities which suffer such men to come in amongst them, and drive not away and banish every man, whether foreigner or citizen, who sets up in any such profession.

*Socrates.* Has any of the sophists done you any injury, Anytus? or why else are you so angry with them?

*Anytus.* I have never, by Jupiter, conversed with one of them myself; nor would I suffer so to do any person who belonged to me.

*Socrates.* You have no experience at all then of those men.

*Anytus.* And never desire to have any.

*Socrates.* How then should you know if there is any good or any harm in their teaching, when you have no experience of it at all?

*Anytus.* Easily enough. For I know what sort of fellows they are, whether I have had any experience or not of them and of their teaching.

*Socrates.* You have the gift of divination perhaps, Anytus. For how otherwise you could know what they are, according to your own account, I should much wonder. But we were not inquiring to what persons Meno might go and be made a bad man. As to these, if you will, let them be the sophists. But now tell us

of those others : and do an act of kindness to this hereditary friend of yours, in directing him to what persons in this great city he may go and be made eminent in that virtue which I gave you a description of just now.

*Anytus.* But why did not you direct him to such persons yourself?

*Socrates.* What persons I had imagined were the teachers of these duties I have told you. But I happen to have said nothing to the purpose, as you inform me.

*Anytus.* There is some truth however in that perhaps.

*Socrates.* Now, therefore, do you in your turn tell him to whom of the Athenians he should go. Name any one you choose.

*Anytus.* What occasion has he to hear any one man's name? For of the men of honour and virtue among the Athenians, there is not one, the first he meets with, who would not make him a better man than the sophists would, if he will but hearken and be observant.

*Socrates.* But did these men of honour and virtue become such spontaneously, and without having learnt from any man to be what they are? and are they able  
93 to teach others what they were never taught themselves?

*Anytus.* They, I presume, learn from those who went before them, men of like honour and virtue. Or think you not that our city has produced many excellent men?

*Socrates.* I think, Anytus, that in this city there are men excellent in political affairs, and that there have been others no less excellent before them. But were they good teachers of that political excellence? For it is this which happens to be the subject of our present debate: not whether men of honour and virtue are to be found at present in this city or not; nor whether such were to be found here formerly: but whether virtue is to be taught or not. This we have been of a long time considering and inquiring; and in prosecuting the inquiry, we are fallen upon this question, whether those excellent men, either of these or of former days, knew how to impart, or to deliver down to others, that virtue in which they themselves are so excellent; or whether it be impossible for man to deliver down or to impart



virtue, and for men to receive it one from another. This it is which we have been long examining, I and Meno, Consider the question now in this manner, on the footing of your own argument. Would you not say that Themistocles was a man of virtue?

*Anytus.* I would; and that he was so the most of all men too.

*Socrates.* And would you not then say, that if ever any man could teach his own virtue to another, Themistocles was a good teacher?

*Anytus.* I suppose he was, had he had a mind to teach.

*Socrates.* But do you suppose that he had no mind to have some others made men of honour and virtue, and especially his own son? or do you imagine that he maliciously and designedly withheld from him that virtue in which he himself was excellent? Did you never hear that Themistocles taught his son Cleophantus to be an excellent horseman? and that his son attained to such a pitch of excellence, that he would keep himself for a long time standing upright upon horses in full speed, and in this situation would throw his javelin; and performed many other surprising feats of horsemanship, in which his father had him instructed; and that he made him skilled in all other accomplishments, such as depend on having had good masters? Have you heard all this from elderly people who remember it?

*Anytus.* I have.

*Socrates.* The disposition of his son therefore is not to be found fault with as untowardly and unteachable?

*Anytus.* Perhaps it is not.

*Socrates.* But what say you to this? That Cleophantus the son of Themistocles was a skilful and an excellent man in the same way as his father was, have you ever heard this from any man, either young or old?

*Anytus.* No, truly.

*Socrates.* Do we imagine then that he chose to breed him up in such studies and exercises as he did; and yet, in that wisdom and skill in which he himself excelled, to make him, his own son, not at all a better man than his neighbours, if virtue could be taught?

*Anytus.* That indeed is, perhaps, not to be supposed.

*Socrates.* Such a teacher of virtue now is this teacher of yours, a man whom you yourself acknowledge to have been one of the best men of the last age. And now let us consider another, Aristides, the son of  
94 *Lysimachus.* Do you not agree that he was a man of virtue?

*Anytus.* I do entirely.

*Socrates.* And did he not give his son Lysimachus the best education to be had at Athens, so far as depended on masters and teachers? and do you think he has made him a better man than common? You have had some acquaintance with him, and you see what sort of a man he is. Let another instance, if you please, be Pericles, a man so magnanimously wise. You know that he bred up two sons, Paralus and Xanthippus.

*Anytus.* I do.

*Socrates.* These, as you know also, he taught horsemanship so as to make them equal in that skill to any of the Athenians. In music too, and gymnastic, and all other accomplishments which depend on art, he instructed them so well that none excelled them. But had he no mind to make them good men? I believe he wanted not inclination so to do; but I suspect it to be impossible to teach virtue. And that you may not imagine that I speak only of a few, and those of the meanest birth among the Athenians, and such as wanted abilities for such an affair, consider that Thucydides also bred up two sons, Melesias and Stephanus, giving them a good education in all other respects, and particularly in the exercise of wrestling, in which they excelled all their countrymen. For he had one of his sons instructed by Xanthius, the other by Eudorus; and these two masters, in the art of wrestling, were thought to be the best of the age. Do you not remember this?

*Anytus.* I remember that I have heard so.

*Socrates.* Is it not evident then, that he would never have taught his children those things, the teaching of which must have put him to expense, and, at the same time, have neglected what would have cost him nothing, the teaching them to be good men, if such a thing was

possible to be taught? But Thucydides, perhaps it may be imagined, was a mean inconsiderable person, who had but few friends among the Athenians or their allies. It was not so. For he was of a noble house, and had great power in Athens, and much weight in the other Grecian states. So that, if his sons could have made good men by teaching, he might easily have found out some person to make them so, either one of his own countrymen, or a foreigner, if he himself wanted leisure, on account of his public employments and his administration of the state. But I fear, friend Anytus, that virtue is a thing impossible to be taught.

*Anytus.* You seem to me, Socrates, to be ready at abuse, and to speak ill of others with great facility. But I would advise you, if you choose to hearken to me, to be more cautious, and to take care of yourself. For that, in other cities too, it is perhaps an easy matter to do a man a mischief, as well as a piece of service; but here, at Athens, it is so more especially; and, if I 95 mistake not, you are sensible of it yourself.

*Socrates.* Anytus seems to me to be angry, Meno. And I am not at all surprised at it. For, in the first place, he supposes that I spoke ill of those persons I mentioned: and then he takes himself to be such another as they were. Now if this man should ever come to know what it is to speak ill of others, he will cease to be angry: but at present he is ignorant of it. Do you therefore answer now, and tell me; are there not amongst us men of honour and virtue?

*Meno.* Certainly there are.

*Socrates.* But are these men willing to offer themselves to the youth to teach them virtue? do they profess the teaching of it? or do they agree that virtue is a thing which can be taught?

*Meno.* No, by Jupiter, Socrates, they do not. For you may hear them sometimes maintaining that it may be taught, at other times that it cannot be taught.

*Socrates.* Shall we say then that these men are teachers of virtue, when they have not settled so much as this point, whether virtue can be taught or not?

*Meno.* I should think we should not, Socrates.

*Socrates.* Well; but what say you of those sophists, the only persons who profess to teach virtue, think you that they are the teachers?

*Meno.* It is for this, O Socrates, that I especially admire Gorgias; for that one shall never hear him making any such professions, or taking upon himself an office of that kind. On the contrary, he laughs at those others whenever he hears them engaging to teach men to be virtuous; and thinks it the office of a sophist only to make men great orators and powerful in speaking.

*Socrates.* You do not think then that the sophists neither are the teachers of virtue?

*Meno.* I know not what to say, Socrates, to this point. They have the same effect on me as they have on most other people; sometimes I think they are, and sometimes that they are not.

*Socrates.* Do you know, that not only yourself and those others, who are versed in civil affairs, sometimes think that virtue is acquired through teaching, and sometimes that it is not; do you know that Theognis the poet is of the same mind, and speaks exactly in the same manner?

*Meno.* In what verses of his?

*Socrates.* In his Elegiacs; where he says,

Mix evermore with men, through virtue, great;  
And near to theirs be placed thy happy seat:  
Still be companion of their board and bowl,  
And still to what delights them bend thy soul,  
For good through sweet contagion shall be caught,  
And virtue be by living manners taught.  
But converse of bad men is folly's school;  
Where sense, taught backward, sinks into a fool.

Do you perceive that in these verses he speaks of virtue as if it might be acquired through teaching?

*Meno.* It appears so to me.

*Socrates.* And yet in other verses a little farther on he says,

To fools their wisdom could the wise impart;  
Could understanding be infus'd by art;  
Or could right thought into the mind be driv'n;  
For this how oft would great rewards be giv'n?

That is, to those men who were complete masters in this skill. And again he says,

Ne'er did bad son from virtuous father rise,  
If duly nurtur'd by his precepts wise.  
But whate'er culture careful we bestow,  
Ne'er in bad soil can seed of virtue grow.

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Do you observe, that in speaking again upon the same subject, he contradicts himself, and says the very reverse of what he had said before?

*Meno.* So it appears.

*Socrates.* Can you tell me now of any other thing, where they who profess to be teachers are held by all men to be so far from teaching it to others, as to be ignorant of it themselves, and to have no merit in that very thing which they pretend to teach; and where those who are by all men allowed to be excellent themselves, sometimes say it may be taught, and sometimes that it cannot? Those who are so unsettled and perplexed about any subject whatever, would you say that they are the proper masters and teachers of it?

*Meno.* By Jupiter, not I.

*Socrates.* If then neither the sophists, nor those who are themselves excellent men, are teachers of virtue, it is plain there can be no others beside.

*Meno.* I think there can be none.

*Socrates.* And if no teachers, then no scholars neither.

*Meno.* I think what you say is true,

*Socrates.* But we agreed before, that a thing in which neither teachers of it nor scholars are to be found, is not the subject of teaching, and cannot be taught.

*Meno.* We were agreed in this.

*Socrates.* Of virtue now there appear nowhere any teachers,

*Meno.* Very true.

*Socrates.* And if no teachers of it, then no scholars in it neither.

*Meno.* It appears so.

*Socrates.* Virtue therefore must be a thing which cannot be taught.

*Meno.* It seems so, if we have considered the matter

rightly. And hence, Socrates, I am led to wonder, whether any men really good are ever to be found or not; and if there are, by what means they became such.

*Socrates.* We are in danger, O Meno! of being found, you and I, both of us, very insufficient reasoners on the point in question; and you not to have been fully instructed by Gorgias, nor I by Prodicus. Above all things therefore ought we to apply our minds to ourselves; and to search out a person who by some certain means would make us better men. I say this with regard to the inquiry now before us; in which we have been so foolish as not to consider, that it is not under the conduct of science that the affairs of men are administered rightly and well; or, if we should not choose to grant that, at least that it is not under the conduct of science only, but of some other thing also which is different from science; and perhaps the knowledge of the means by which men become good hath escaped us.

*Meno.* How so, Socrates?

*Socrates.* I will tell you how. That those men who are good and virtuous must also be advantageous to us  
97 we have agreed rightly; and that it is impossible it should be otherwise. Is not this true?

*Meno.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* And that they are advantageous to us on this account, because they conduct our affairs rightly, should we not do well in admitting this?

*Meno.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* But we seem not to have done well in granting, that unless a man be prudent, it is not possible for him to conduct affairs rightly.

*Meno.* What mean you now by the word rightly?

*Socrates.* I will tell you what I mean. If a man who knew the way to Larissa, or wherever else you please, were to walk at the head of others whom he had undertaken to conduct thither, would he not conduct them well and rightly?

*Meno.* Without doubt.

*Socrates.* And how would it be were a man to undertake this who had only a right opinion about the way,

but had never gone thither himself, nor had any certain knowledge of the way, would not he also conduct them rightly?

*Meno.* To be sure.

*Socrates.* And so long as he had anyhow a right opinion of the way, which the other man knew with certainty, he would not in the least be a worse guide, though only surmising justly, and not knowing clearly, than the other with all his perfect knowledge?

*Meno.* Not at all worse.

*Socrates.* Right opinion, therefore, with regard to right action, is not at all a worse guide than science or perfect knowledge. And this it is which we omitted just now in considering the nature of virtue; when we said that prudence only or knowledge led to right action; it is this, right opinion.

*Meno.* It seems so.

*Socrates.* Right opinion therefore is not at all of less advantage to man than certain knowledge.

*Meno.* In this respect, however, *Socrates*, it is; in that he who has a perfect knowledge of his end, would always attain it; but the man who had only a right opinion of it, sometimes would attain to it, and sometimes would not.

*Socrates.* How say you? would not the man, who had a right opinion of it, always attain to it, so long as he entertained that right opinion?

*Meno.* It appears to me that he must. And therefore I wonder, *Socrates*, this being the case, on what account it is that science is so much more valuable than right opinion; and indeed in what respect it is that they differ at all one from the other.

*Socrates.* Do you know now why you wonder? or shall I tell you?

*Meno.* By all means tell me.

*Socrates.* It is because you never considered attentively those images made by *Dædalus*. But perhaps you have none of them in your country.

*Meno.* With what view is it now that you speak of these images?

*Socrates.* Because these, if they are not fastened, run

away from us, and become fugitives; but if they are fastened, they abide by us.

*Meno.* Well; and what then?

*Socrates.* To have in one's possession any of these works of his loose and unfastened, is like to the being master of a runaway slave, a matter of little value, because not permanent: but when fastened and secured, they are things of great value; for indeed they are works of great beauty. But you ask, with what view it is that I speak of these images. I answer,—It is with a view to true opinions. For true opinions also, so long as they abide by us, are valuable goods, and procure for  
98 us all good things: but they are not disposed to abide with us a long time; for they soon slip away out of our souls, and become fugitives. Hence are they of small value to a man, until he has fastened and bound them down, by deducing them rationally from their cause. And this, my friend Meno, is reminiscence, as we before agreed. But when they are thus bound and fastened, in the first place they become truly known, and in consequence of this they become stable and abide with us. Now it is on this very account that science is a thing more valuable than right opinion; and in this respect it is they differ, in that the parts of science only are fastened one to another, and bound down together.

*Meno.* By Jupiter, Socrates, they are similar to some such things as those to which you resemble them.

*Socrates.* Nay, for my part, I speak thus not from knowledge; but only from conjecture. But that right opinion and science are two different things, this, as it appears to me, I do not merely imagine or conjecture. For if I were to profess the knowledge of any things whatever (and there are but a few things which I could profess to know), this I would set down for one of them.

*Meno.* You are entirely right, Socrates.

*Socrates.* Well; and am I not right in this also, that true opinion, having the conduct of any work or action whatever, executes her office full as well as science?

*Meno.* In this too I think you are in the right.

*Socrates.* Right opinion, therefore, is a thing not at all inferior to science, nor less beneficial with regard to



the execution of any work, or the performance of any action; nor is the man, who has right opinions, inferior (in this respect) to the man of science.

*Meno.* Very true.

*Socrates.* And we agreed before, that a good man was beneficial or advantageous to others.

*Meno.* We did.

*Socrates.* Since, therefore, it is not through science only that men have been good and beneficial to their country (if any such men there may have been), but also by means of right opinion; and since neither of these is with men by nature, neither science nor right opinion; or do you think that either of them comes by nature?

*Meno.* Not I.

*Socrates.* Since, then, they are not by nature, by nature neither is it that men could have been good and virtuous.

*Meno.* Certainly not.

*Socrates.* Seeing now, that virtue comes not by nature, we should, in the next place, after this consider if it comes through teaching.

*Meno.* To be sure we should.

*Socrates.* Did it not appear to us both, that if virtue was wisdom, then it came through teaching?

*Meno.* It did.

*Socrates.* And that if virtue came through teaching, then virtue would be wisdom?

*Meno.* Very true.

*Socrates.* And that if there were any teachers of virtue, virtue would in that case be a thing that came through teaching; otherwise not?

*Meno.* Just so.

*Socrates.* But we have agreed that there were no teachers of it.

*Meno.* True.

*Socrates.* We are agreed, therefore, that virtue comes not through teaching; and that virtue is not wisdom.

*Meno.* Certainly so.

*Socrates.* But we agreed besides, that virtue was something good.

*Meno.* True.

*Socrates.* And that whatever conducted affairs rightly was a thing good and serviceable to us.

*Meno.* We did clearly.

- 99 *Socrates.* And that affairs are conducted rightly by these two things only, true opinion and science; possessed of either of which two, a man makes a good leader and guide. Whatever comes from fortune is not the effect of human conduct. But so far as man has to do in conducting rightly, it is only through one of these means, true opinion and science.

*Meno.* I think so.

*Socrates.* Now since virtue comes not through teaching, it is not the effect of science.

*Meno.* It appears that it is not.

*Socrates.* Of the two only things then, which are good and serviceable to man's right conduct, we have thrown one out of the question; having agreed that science is not the thing through which civil affairs are administered and conducted rightly.

*Meno.* I think it is not.

*Socrates.* Not therefore through any wisdom, nor as being wise, did such men govern in the state; such as Themistocles, and the rest, whom Anytus here just now recounted. And for this very reason they were not capable of making others to be such men as themselves; because it was not science that made them what they were.

*Meno.* The case, O Socrates, seems to be as you represent it.

*Socrates.* If then it is not science, it follows that it must be the other thing which remains of the two, namely, right opinion, through which public affairs are administered rightly by our statesmen and politicians; men who, in point of wisdom, are not at all superior to the oracle singers and divine prophets. For these also utter many true sayings, but have no real knowledge of any one thing they utter.

*Meno.* I suspect this to be the case.

*Socrates.* Now do not those men, O Meno, deserve the character of divine men, who either speak or act aright in many things of great importance, without any intel-

lectual knowledge of the subjects concerning which they speak or act?

*Meno.* By all means do they.

*Socrates.* Rightly then should we call those men divine, whom we just now mentioned, the oracle singers and the prophets, and all who are inspired by the Muses. Nor at all less divine men than these should we say that the politicians are, no less enthusiasts, inspired divinely, and possessed by the Divinity, when in their speeches they direct aright many and great affairs, without any real knowledge of the subjects they are speaking of.

*Meno.* Certainly we should.

*Socrates.* And accordingly the women, you know, Meno, call men of virtue by the name of divine men. And the Lacedæmonians, when they celebrate with encomiums any man of virtue, are used to say of him that he is a divine man.

*Meno.* And they appear, O Socrates, to speak justly too. And yet, perhaps, Anytus here is offended at what you say.

*Socrates.* I give myself no manner of concern about it. With him, Meno, we shall have some discourse at another time. But if we, at this time, during all this conversation, have pursued our inquiries and reasonings aright, virtue can neither come by nature, nor yet through teaching; but to those with whom it is, it must come by a divine portion or allotment, without the intelligence or true knowledge of it; unless amongst the politicians there should be found some person capable of making another man a good politician. But if there should, he might almost be said to be such a one amongst the living, as Homer tells us that Teresias is amongst the dead; where, speaking of him and of the rest who are in Hades, he says,

Fill'd is he only with discerning mind;  
The rest flit, empty shadows, dark and blind.

Exactly the same pre-eminence hath such a man; being as it were the truth and substance of things, compared with shadows, in respect of virtue.

*Meno.* What you say, O Socrates, seems to me to be in the highest degree just.

*Socrates.* From this reasoning, then, Meno, it appears to us, that such as are possessed of virtue, have it as a divine portion or allotment to them. But on this point we shall then arrive at certainty, when, previous to our inquiries by what means it is that virtue comes to men, we set about searching first, what the essence is of virtue.—But it is now time for me to go somewhere else. And do you, since you are persuaded yourself of the truth of those conclusions, the result of our inquiries, persuade your friend Anytus to believe them also. For he may thus be softened and become milder; and you, by thus persuading him, may possibly do a piece of service to your country.

PHÆDO,  
OR  
THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

*First Echecrates, Phædo.*

St.

*Then Socrates, Apollodorus, Cebes, Simmias and Crito.* I.

*Ech.* WERE you personally present, Phædo, with Socrates on that day when he drank the poison in prison? or did you hear an account of it from some one else? P.  
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*Phæd.* I was there myself, Echecrates.

*Ech.* What then did he say before his death? and how did he die? for I should be glad to hear: for scarcely any citizen of Phlius ever visits Athens now, nor has any stranger for a long time come from thence, who was able to give us a clear account of the particulars, except that he died from drinking poison; but he was unable to tell us any thing more.

*Phæd.* And did you not hear about the trial how it went off? 58

*Ech.* Yes; some one told me this; and I wondered, that as it took place so long ago, he appears to have died long afterwards. What was the reason of this, Phædo?

*Phæd.* An accidental circumstance happened in his favour, Echecrates: for the poop of the ship which the Athenians send to Delos, chanced to be crowned on the day before the trial.

*Ech.* But what is this ship?

*Phæd.* It is the ship, as the Athenians say, in which Theseus formerly conveyed the fourteen boys and girls to Crete, and saved both them and himself. They, therefore, made a vow to Apollo on that occasion, as it is said, that if they were saved they would every year

despatch a solemn embassy to Delos; which from that time to the present, they send yearly to the god. When they begin the preparations for this solemn embassy, they have a law that the city shall be purified during this period, and that no public execution shall take place until the ship has reached Delos, and returned to Athens: and this occasionally takes a long time, when the winds happen to impede their passage. The commencement of the embassy is when the priest of Apollo has crowned the poop of the ship. And this was done, as I said, on the day before the trial: on this account Socrates had a long interval in prison between the trial and his death.

*Ech.* And what, Phædo, were the circumstances of his death? what was said and done? and who of his friends were with him? or would not the magistrates allow them to be present, but did he die destitute of friends?

*Phæd.* By no means; but some, indeed several, were present.

*Ech.* Take the trouble, then, to relate to me all the particulars as clearly as you can, unless you have any pressing business.

*Phæd.* I am at leisure, and will endeavour to give you a full account: for to call Socrates to mind, whether speaking myself or listening to some one else, is always most delightful to me.

*Ech.* And indeed, Phædo, you have others to listen to you who are of the same mind. However, endeavour to relate every thing as accurately as you can.

*Phæd.* I was indeed wonderfully affected by being present, for I was not impressed with a feeling of pity, like one present at the death of a friend; for the man appeared to me to be happy, Echecrates, both from his manner and discourse, so fearlessly and nobly did he meet his death: so much so, that it occurred to me, that in going to Hades he was not going without a divine destiny, but that when he arrived there he would be happy, if any one ever was. For this reason I was  
59 entirely uninfluenced by any feeling of pity, as would seem likely to be the case with one present on so mourn-

ful an occasion; nor was I affected by pleasure from being engaged in philosophical discussions, as was our custom; for our conversation was of that kind. But an altogether unaccountable feeling possessed me, a kind of unusual mixture compounded of pleasure and pain together, when I considered that he was immediately about to die. And all of us who were present were affected in much the same manner, at one time laughing, at another weeping, one of us especially, Apollodorus, for you know the man and his manner.

*Ech.* How should I not?

*Phæd.* He, then, was entirely overcome by these emotions; and I, too, was troubled, as well as the others.

*Ech.* But who were present, Phædo?

*Phæd.* Of his fellow-countrymen, this Apollodorus was present, and Critobolus, and his father Crito, moreover Hermogenes, Epigenes, Æschines, and Antisthenes; Ctesippus the Pæanian, Menexenus, and some other of his countrymen were also there: Plato I think was sick.

*Ech.* Were any strangers present?

*Phæd.* Yes: Simmias the Theban, Cebes, and Phædonides: and from Megara, Euclides and Terpsion.

*Ech.* But what! were not Aristippus and Cleombrotus present?

*Phæd.* No: for they were said to be at Ægina.

*Ech.* Was any one else there?

*Phæd.* I think that these were nearly all who were present.

*Ech.* Well now: what do you say was the subject of conversation?

*Phæd.* I will endeavour to relate the whole to you from the beginning. On the preceding days I and the others were constantly in the habit of visiting Socrates, meeting early in the morning at the court-house where the trial took place, for it was near the prison. Here then we waited every day till the prison was opened; conversing with each other; for it was not opened very early, but, as soon as it was opened we went in to Socrates, and usually spent the day with him. On that

occasion, however, we met earlier than usual; for on the preceding day, when we left the prison in the evening, we heard that the ship had arrived from Delos. We therefore urged each other to come as early as possible to the accustomed place; accordingly we came, and the porter, who used to admit us, coming out, told us to wait, and not enter until he called us. "For," he said, "the Eleven are now freeing Socrates from his bonds, and announcing to him that he must die to-day." But in no long time he returned, and bade us enter.

When we entered, we found Socrates just freed from  
60 his bonds, and Xantippe, you know her, holding his little boy and sitting by him. As soon as Xantippe saw us, she wept aloud and said such things as women usually do on such occasions, as "Socrates, your friends will now converse with you for the last time and you with them." But Socrates, looking towards Crito, said, "Crito, let some one take her home." Upon which some of Crito's attendants led her away, wailing and beating herself.

But Socrates sitting up in bed, drew up his leg, and rubbed it with his hand, and as he rubbed it, said, "What an unaccountable thing, my friends, that seems to be, which men call pleasure; and how wonderfully is it related towards that which appears to be its contrary, pain; in that they will not both be present to a man at the same time, yet, if any one pursues and attains the one, he is almost always compelled to receive the other, as if they were both united together from one head.

"And it seems to me," he said, "that if Æsop had observed this he would have made a fable from it, how the deity, wishing to reconcile these warring principles, when he could not do so, united their heads together, and from hence whomsoever the one visits the other attends immediately after; as appears to be the case with me, since I suffered pain in my leg before from the chain, but now pleasure seems to have succeeded."

Hereupon Cebes, interrupting him, said, "By Jupiter, Socrates, you have done well in reminding me: with



respect to the poems which you made, by putting into metre those Fables of Æsop and the hymn to Apollo, several other persons asked me, and especially Evenus recently, with what design you made them after you came here, whereas before you had never made any. If, therefore, you care at all that I should be able to answer Evenus, when he asks me again, for I am sure he will do so, tell me what I must say to him."

"Tell him the truth then, Cebes," he replied, "that I did not make them from a wish to compete with him, or his poems, for I knew that this would be no easy matter; but that I might discover the meaning of certain dreams, and discharge my conscience, if this should happen to be the music which they have often ordered me to apply myself to. For they were to the following purport; often in my past life the same dream visited me, appearing at different times in different forms, yet always saying the same thing, 'Socrates,' it said, 'apply yourself to and practise music.' And I formerly supposed that it exhorted and encouraged me to continue the pursuit I was engaged in, as those who 61 cheer on racers, so that the dream encouraged me to continue the pursuit I was engaged in, namely, to apply myself to music, since philosophy is the highest music, and I was devoted to it. But now since my trial took place, and the festival of the god retarded my death, it appeared to me that, if by chance the dream so frequently enjoined me to apply myself to popular music, I ought not to disobey it but do so, for that it would be safer for me not to depart hence before I had discharged my conscience by making some poems in obedience to the dream. Thus, then, I first of all composed a hymn to the god whose festival was present, and after the god, considering that a poet, if he means to be a poet, ought to make fables and not discourses, and knowing that I was not skilled in making fables, I therefore put into verse those fables of Æsop, which were at hand, and were known to me, and which first occurred to me."

"Tell this then to Evenus, Cebes, and bid him farewell, and, if he is wise, to follow me as soon as he can."

But I depart, as it seems, to-day; for so the Athenians order."

To this Simmias said, "What is this, Socrates, which you exhort Evenus to do? for I often meet with him; and from what I know of him, I am pretty certain that he will not at all be willing to comply with your advice."

"What then," said he, "is not Evenus a philosopher?"

"To me he seems to be so," said Simmias.

"Then he will be willing," rejoined Socrates, "and so will every one who worthily engages in this study; perhaps indeed he will not commit violence on himself, for that they say is not allowable." And as he said this he let down his leg from the bed on the ground, and in this posture continued during the remainder of the discussion.

Cebes then asked him, "What do you mean, Socrates, by saying that it is not lawful to commit violence on one's-self, but that a philosopher should be willing to follow one who is dying?"

"What, Cebes, have not you and Simmias, who have conversed familiarly with Philolaus on this subject, heard?"

"Nothing very clearly, Socrates."

"I however speak only from hearsay; what then I have heard I have no scruple in telling. And perhaps it is most becoming for one who is about to travel there, to enquire and speculate about the journey thither, what kind we think it is. What else can one do in the interval before sunset?"

"Why then, Socrates, do they say that it is not allowable to kill one's-self? for I, as you asked just now, have heard both Philolaus, when he lived with us, and several others say that it was not right to do this; but I never heard any thing clear upon the subject from any one."

62 "Then you should consider it attentively," said Socrates, "for perhaps you may hear: probably, however, it will appear wonderful to you, if this alone of all other things is an universal truth, and it never

happens to a man, as is the case in all other things, that at some times and to some persons only it is better to die than to live; yet that these men for whom it is better to die—this probably will appear wonderful to you—may not without impiety do this good to themselves, but must await another benefactor."

Then Cebes, gently smiling, said, speaking in his own dialect, "Jove be witness."

"And indeed," said Socrates, "it would appear to be unreasonable, yet still perhaps it has some reason on its side. The maxim indeed given on this subject in the mystical doctrines, that we men are in a kind of prison, and that we ought not to free ourselves from it and escape, appears to me difficult to be understood, and not easy to penetrate. This, however, appears to me, Cebes, to be well said, that the gods take care of us, and that we men are one of their possessions. Does it not seem so to you?"

"It does," replied Cebes.

"Therefore," said he, "if one of your slaves were to kill himself, without your having intimated that you wished him to die, should you not be angry with him, and should you not punish him if you could?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Perhaps then in this point of view, it is not unreasonable to assert, that a man ought not to kill himself before the deity lays him under a necessity of doing so, such as that now laid on me."

"This, indeed," said Cebes, "appears to be probable. But what you said just now, Socrates, that philosophers should be very willing to die, appears to be an absurdity, if what we said just now is agreeable to reason, that it is God who takes care of us, and that we are his property. For that the wisest men should not be grieved at leaving that service in which they who govern them are the best of all masters, namely the gods, is not consistent with reason. For surely he cannot think that he will take better care of himself when he has become free: but a foolish man might perhaps think thus, that he should fly from his master, and would not reflect that he ought not to fly from a good one, but should cling

to him as much as possible, therefore he would fly against all reason : but a man of sense would desire to be constantly with one better than himself. Thus, Socrates, the contrary of what you just now said is likely to be the case; for it becomes the wise to be grieved at dying, but the foolish to rejoice."

63 Socrates, on hearing this, appeared to me to be pleased with the pertinacity of Cebes, and looking towards us, said, "Cebes, you see, always searches out arguments, and is not at all willing to admit at once any thing one has said."

Whereupon Simmias replied, "But indeed, Socrates, Cebes appears to me, now, to say something to the purpose : for with what design should men really wise fly from masters who are better than themselves, and so readily leave them? And Cebes appears to me to direct his argument against you, because you so easily endure to abandon both us, and those good rulers, as you yourself confess, the gods."

"You speak justly," said Socrates, "for I think you mean that I ought to make my defence to this charge, as if I were in a court of justice."

"Certainly," replied Simmias.

"Come then," said he, "I will endeavour to defend myself more successfully before you than before the judges. For," he proceeded, "Simmias and Cebes, if I did not think that I should go first of all amongst other deities who are both wise and good, and, next, amongst men who have departed this life, better than any here, I should be wrong in not grieving at death : but now be assured, I hope to go amongst good men, though I would not positively assert it, that, however, I shall go amongst gods who are perfectly good masters, be assured I can positively assert this, if I can any thing of the kind. So that, on this account, I am not so much troubled, but I entertain a good hope that something awaits those who die, and that, as was said long since, it will be far better for the good than the evil."

"What then, Socrates," said Simmias, "would you go away keeping this persuasion to yourself, or would

you impart it to us? For this good appears to me to be also common to us; and at the same time it will be an apology for you, if you can persuade us to believe what you say."

"I will endeavour to do so," he said. "But first let us attend to Crito here, and see what it is he seems to have for some time wished to say."

"What else, Socrates," said Crito, "but what he who is to give you the poison told me some time ago, that I should tell you to speak as little as possible? For he says that men become too much heated by speaking, and that nothing of this kind ought to interfere with the poison, and that otherwise, those who did so were sometimes compelled to drink two or three times."

To which Socrates replied, "Let him alone, and let him attend to his own business, and prepare to give it me twice, or, if occasion requires, even thrice."

"I was almost certain what you would say," answered Crito, "but he has been some time pestering me."

"Never mind him," he rejoined.

"But now I wish to render an account to you, my judges, of the reason why a man who has really devoted his life to philosophy, when he is about to die, appears to me, on good grounds, to have confidence, and to entertain a firm hope that the greatest good will befall him in the other world, when he has departed this life. How then this comes to pass, Simmias and Cebes, I will endeavour to explain.

"For as many as rightly apply themselves to philosophy seem to have left all others in ignorance, that they aim at nothing else than to die and be dead. If this then is true, it would surely be absurd to be anxious about nothing else than this during their whole life, but, when it arrives, to be grieved at what they have been long anxious about and aimed at."

Upon this, Simmias, smiling, said, "By Jupiter, Socrates, though I am not now at all inclined to smile, you have made me do so; for I think that the multitude, if they heard this, would think it was very well said in reference to philosophers, and that our countrymen

particularly would agree with you, that true philosophers do desire death, and that they are by no means ignorant that they deserve to suffer it."

"And indeed, Simmias, they would speak the truth, except in asserting that they are not ignorant; for they are ignorant of the sense in which true philosophers desire to die, and in what sense they deserve death, and what kind of death. But," he said, "let us take leave of them, and speak to one another. Do we think that death is any thing?"

"Certainly," replied Simmias.

"Is it any thing else than the separation of the soul from the body? and is not this to die, for the body to be apart by itself separated from the soul, and for the soul to subsist apart by itself separated from the body? Is death any thing else than this?"

"No, but this," he replied.

"Consider then, my good friend, whether you are of the same opinion as me; for thus I think we shall understand better the subject we are considering. Does it appear to you to be becoming in a philosopher to be anxious about pleasures, as they are called, such as meats and drinks?"

"By no means, Socrates," said Simmias.

"But what? about the pleasures of love?"

"Not at all."

"What then? does such a man appear to you to think other bodily indulgences of value? for instance, does he seem to you to value or despise the possession of magnificent garments and sandals, and other ornaments of the body, except so far as necessity compels him to use them?"

"The true philosopher," he answered, "appears to me to despise them."

"Does not then," he continued, "the whole employment of such a man appear to you to be, not about the body, but to separate himself from it as much as possible, and be occupied about his soul?"

"It does."

"First of all then, in such matters, does not the  
65 philosopher, above all other men, evidently free his soul as much as he can from communion with the body?"

"It appears so."

"And it appears, Simmias, to the generality of men, that he who takes no pleasure in such things, and who does not use them, does not deserve to live; but that he nearly approaches to death who cares nothing for the pleasures that subsist through the body."

"You speak very truly."

"But what with respect to the acquisition of wisdom, is the body an impediment or not, if any one takes it with him as a partner in the search? What I mean is this: Do sight and hearing convey any truth to men, or are they such as the poets constantly sing, who say that we neither hear nor see any thing with accuracy? If, however, these bodily senses are neither accurate nor clear, much less can the others be so: for they are all far inferior to these. Do they not seem so to you?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"When then," said he, "does the soul light on the truth? for, when it attempts to consider any thing in conjunction with the body, it is plain that it is then led astray by it."

"You say truly."

"Must it not then be by reasoning, if at all, that any of the things that really are become known to it?"

"Yes."

"And surely the soul then reasons best when none of these things disturb it, neither hearing, nor sight, nor pain, nor pleasure of any kind, but it retires as much as possible within itself, taking leave of the body, and, as far as it can, not communicating or being in contact with it, it aims at the discovery of that which is."

"Such is the case."

"Does not then the soul of the philosopher, in these cases, despise the body, and flee from it, and seek to retire within itself?"

"It appears so."

"But what as to such things as these, Simmias? Do we say that justice itself is something or nothing?"

"We say it is something, by Jupiter."

"And that beauty and goodness are something?"

"How not?"

"Now then: have you ever seen any thing of this kind with your eyes?"

"By no means," he replied.

"Did you ever lay hold of them by any other bodily sense? but I speak generally, as of magnitude, health, strength, and, in a word, of the essence of every thing, that is to say, what each is. Is then the exact truth of these perceived by means of the body, or is it thus, whoever amongst us habituates himself to reflect most deeply and accurately on each several thing about which he is considering, he will make the nearest approach to the knowledge of it?"

"Certainly."

"Would not he, then, do this with the utmost purity, who should in the highest degree approach each subject by means of the mere mental faculties, neither employing the sight in conjunction with the reflective faculty, 66 nor introducing any other sense together with reasoning; but who, using pure reflection by itself, should attempt to search out each essence purely by itself, freed as much as possible from the eyes and ears, and, in a word, from the whole body, as disturbing the soul, and not suffering it to acquire truth and wisdom, when it is in communion with it. Is not he the person, Simmias, if any one can, who will arrive at the knowledge of that which is?"

"You speak with wonderful truth, Socrates," replied Simmias.

"Wherefore," he said, "it necessarily follows from all this, that some such opinion as this should be entertained by genuine philosophers, so that they should speak among themselves as follows: 'A by-path, as it were, seems to lead us on in our researches undertaken by reason,' because as long as we are encumbered with the body, and our soul is contaminated with such an evil, we can never fully attain to what we desire; and this, we say, is truth. For the body subjects us to innumerable hindrances on account of its necessary support, and moreover if any diseases befall us, they impede us in our search after that which is; and it fills us with longings, desires, fears, all kinds of fancies, and



a multitude of absurdities, so that, as it is said in real truth, by reason of the body it is never possible for us to make any advances in wisdom. For nothing else but the body and its desires occasion wars, seditions, and contests; for all wars amongst us arise on account of our desire to acquire wealth; and we are compelled to acquire wealth on account of the body, being enslaved to its service; and consequently on all these accounts we are hindered in the pursuit of philosophy. But the worst of all is, that if it leaves us any leisure, and we apply ourselves to the consideration of any subject, it constantly obtrudes itself in the midst of our researches, and occasions trouble and disturbance, and confounds us so that we are not able by reason of it to discern the truth. It has then in reality been demonstrated to us, that if we are ever to know any thing purely, we must be separated from the body, and contemplate the things themselves by the mere soul. And then, as it seems, we shall obtain that which we desire, and which we profess ourselves to be lovers of, wisdom, when we are dead, as reason shows, but not while we are alive. For if it is not possible to know any thing purely in conjunction with the body, one of these two things must follow, either that we can never acquire knowledge, or only after we are dead; for then the soul will subsist 67 apart by itself, separate from the body, but not before. And while we live, we shall thus, as it seems, approach nearest to knowledge, if we hold no intercourse or communion at all with the body, except what absolute necessity requires, nor suffer ourselves to be polluted by its nature, but purify ourselves from it, until God himself shall release us. And thus being pure, and freed from the folly of body, we shall in all likelihood be with others like ourselves, and shall of ourselves know the whole real essence, and that probably is truth; for it is not allowable for the impure to attain to the pure. Such things, I think, Simmias, all true lovers of wisdom must both think and say to one another. Does it not seem so to you?"

"Most assuredly, Socrates."

"If this then," said Socrates, "is true, my friend,

there is great hope for one who arrives where I am going, there, if any where, to acquire that in perfection for the sake of which we have taken so much pains during our past life; so that the journey now appointed me is set out upon with good hope, and will be so by any other man who thinks that his mind has been as it were purified."

"Certainly," said Simmias.

"But does not purification consist in this, as was said in a former part of our discourse, in separating as much as possible the soul from the body, and in accustoming it to gather and collect itself by itself on all sides apart from the body, and to dwell, as far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, delivered as it were from the shackles of the body?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Is this then called death, this deliverance and separation of the soul from the body?"

"Assuredly," he answered.

"But, as we affirmed, those who pursue philosophy rightly, are especially and alone desirous to deliver it, and this is the very study of philosophers, the deliverance and separation of the soul from the body, is it not?"

"It appears so."

"Then, as I said at first, would it not be ridiculous for a man who has endeavoured throughout his life to live as near as possible to death, then, when death arrives, to grieve? would not this be ridiculous?"

"How should it not?"

"In reality then, Simmias," he continued, "those who pursue philosophy rightly study to die; and to them of all men death is least formidable. Judge from this. Since they altogether hate the body and desire to keep the soul by itself, would it not be irrational if, when this comes to pass, they should be afraid and grieve, and not be glad to go to that place, where on their arrival they may hope to obtain that which they longed for throughout life; but they longed for wisdom; and to be freed from association with that which they hated? Have many of their own accord wished to descend into

Hades, on account of human objects of affection, their wives and sons, induced by this very hope of there seeing and being with those whom they have loved; and shall one who really loves wisdom, and firmly cherishes this very hope, that he shall no where else attain it in a manner worthy of the name, except in Hades, be grieved at dying, and not gladly go there? We must think that he would gladly go, my friend, if he be in truth a philosopher; for he will be firmly persuaded of this, that he will no where else but there attain wisdom in its purity; and if this be so, would it not be very irrational, as I just now said, if such a man were to be afraid of death?"

"Very much so, by Jupiter," he replied.

"Would not this then," he resumed, "be a sufficient proof to you, with respect to a man whom you should see grieved when about to die, that he was not a lover of wisdom but a lover of his body? and this same person is probably a lover of riches and a lover of honour, one or both of these."

"It certainly is as you say," he replied.

"Does not then," he said, "that which is called fortitude, Simmias, eminently belong to philosophers?"

"By all means," he answered.

"And temperance also, which even the multitude call temperance, and which consists in not being carried away by the passions, but in holding them in contempt, and keeping them in subjection, does not this belong to those only who most despise the body, and live in the study of philosophy?"

"Necessarily so," he replied.

"For," he continued, "if you will consider the fortitude and temperance of others, they will appear to you to be absurd."

"How so, Socrates?"

"Do you know," he said, "that all others consider death among the great evils?"

"They do indeed," he answered.

"Then do the brave amongst them endure death, when they do endure it, through dread of greater evils?"

"It is so."

"All men, therefore, except philosophers, are brave through being afraid and through fear; though it is absurd that any one should be brave through fear and cowardice."

"Certainly."

"But what? are not these amongst them who keep their passions in subjection, affected in the same way? and are they not temperate through a kind of intemperance? and although we may say, perhaps, that this is impossible, nevertheless the manner in which they are affected with respect to this silly temperance resembles this; for, fearing to be deprived of other pleasures, and desiring them, they abstain from some, being mastered  
69 by others. And though they call intemperance the being governed by pleasures, yet it happens to them that, by being mastered by some pleasures, they master others; and this is similar to what was just now said, that in a certain manner they become temperate through intemperance."

"So it seems."

"My dear Simmias, consider that this is not a right exchange for virtue, to barter pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains, fear for fear, and the greater for the lesser, like pieces of money; but that that alone is the right coin, for which we ought to barter all these things, wisdom; and for this, and with this every thing is in reality bought and sold, fortitude, temperance, and justice, and, in a word, true virtue subsists with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears, and every thing else of the kind, are present or absent; but when separated from wisdom, and changed one for another, consider whether such virtue is not a mere outline, and in reality servile, possessing neither soundness nor truth; but the really true virtue is a purification from all such things, and temperance, justice, fortitude, and wisdom itself, are a kind of initiatory purification. And those who instituted the mysteries for us appear to have been by no means contemptible, but in reality to have intimated long since that whoever shall arrive in Hades unexpiated and uninitiated shall lie in mud, but he that

arrives there purified and initiated, shall dwell with the gods. 'For there are,' say those who preside at the mysteries, 'many wand-bearers, but few inspired.' These last, in my opinion, are no other than those who have pursued philosophy rightly: that I might be of their number, I have, to the utmost of my ability, left no means untried, but have endeavoured to the utmost of my power. But whether I have endeavoured rightly and have in any respect succeeded, on arriving there I shall know clearly, if it please God, very shortly, as it appears to me.

"Such then, Simmias and Cebes," he added, "is the defence I make, for that I, on good grounds, do not repine or grieve at leaving you and my masters here, being persuaded that there, no less than here, I shall meet with good masters and friends. But to the multitude this is incredible. If, however, I have succeeded better with you in my defence than I did with the Athenian judges, it is well."

When Socrates had thus spoken, Cebes, taking up the discussion, said, "Socrates, all the rest appears to me to be said rightly, but what you have said respecting the soul will occasion much incredulity in many from the apprehension that, when it is separated from the body, it no longer exists any where, but is destroyed and perishes on the very day in which a man dies, and that immediately it is separated and goes out from the body, it is dispersed and vanishes like breath or smoke, and is no longer any where; since, if it remained any where united in itself, and freed from those evils which you have just now enumerated, there would be an abundant and good hope, Socrates, that what you say is true. But this probably needs no little persuasion and proof, that the soul of a man who dies, exists, and possesses activity and intelligence."

"You say truly, Cebes," said Socrates, "but what shall we do? Are you willing that we should converse on these points, whether such is probably the case or not?"

"Indeed," replied Cebes, "I should gladly hear your opinion on these matters."

"I do not think," said Socrates, "that any one who should now hear us, even though he were a comic poet, would say that I am talking idly, or discoursing on subjects that do not concern me. If you please, then, we will examine into it. Let us consider it in this point of view, whether the souls of men who are dead exist in Hades, or not. This is an ancient saying, which we now call to mind, that souls departing hence exist there, and return hither again, and are produced from the dead. And if this is so, that the living are produced again from the dead, can there be any other consequence than that our souls are there? for surely they could not be produced again if they did not exist; and this would be a sufficient proof that these things are so, if it should in reality be evident that the living are produced from no other source than the dead. But, if this is not the case, there will be need of other arguments."

"Certainly," said Cebes.

"You must not, then," he continued, "consider this only with respect to men, if you wish to ascertain it with greater certainty, but also with respect to all animals and plants, and, in a word, with respect to every thing that is subject to generation, let us see whether they are not all so produced, no otherwise than contraries from contraries, wherever they have any such quality, as for instance the honourable is contrary to the base, and the just to the unjust, and so with ten thousand other things. Let us consider this, then, whether it is necessary that all things which have a contrary should be produced from nothing else than their contrary. As, for instance, when any thing becomes greater, is it not necessary that, from being previously smaller, it afterwards became greater?"

"Yes."

71 "And if it becomes smaller, will it not, from being previously greater, afterwards become smaller?"

"It is so," he replied.

"And from stronger, weaker? and from slower, swifter?"

"Certainly."

"What then? if any thing becomes worse, must it not become so from better? and if more just, from more unjust?"

"How should it not?"

"We have then," he said, "sufficiently determined this, that all things are thus produced, contraries from contraries?"

"Certainly."

"What next? is there also something of this kind in them, for instance, between all two contraries a mutual twofold production, from one to the other, and from that other back again? for between a greater thing and a smaller there is increase and decrease, and do we not accordingly call the one to increase, the other to decrease?"

"Yes," he replied.

"And must not to be separated and commingled, to grow cold and to grow warm, and every thing in the same manner, even though sometimes we have not names to designate them, yet in fact be every where thus circumstanced of necessity, as to be produced from each other, and be subject to a reciprocal generation?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"What then?" said Socrates, "has life any contrary, as waking has its contrary, sleeping?"

"Certainly," he answered.

"What?"

"Death," he replied.

"Are not these, then, produced from each other, since they are contraries, and are not the modes by which they are produced twofold, intervening between these two?"

"How should it be otherwise?"

"I then," continued Socrates, "will describe to you one pair of the contraries which I have just now mentioned, both what it is and its mode of production; and do you describe to me the other. I say that one is to sleep, the other to awake; and from sleeping awaking is produced, and from awaking sleeping, and that the modes of their production are the one to fall asleep, the other to be roused. Have I sufficiently explained this to you or not?"

"Certainly."

"Do you then," he said, "describe to me, in the same manner, with respect to life and death? Do you not say that life is contrary to death?"

"I do."

"And that they are produced from each other?"

"Yes."

"What, then, is produced from life?"

"Death," he replied.

"What, then," said he, "is produced from death?"

"I must needs confess," he replied, "that life is."

"From the dead, then, O Cebes, living things and living men are produced."

"It appears so," he said.

"Our souls, therefore," said Socrates, "exist in Hades."

"So it seems."

"With respect, then, to their mode of production, is not one of them very clear? for to die surely is clear, is it not?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"What, then, shall we do?" he continued; "shall we not find a corresponding contrary mode of production, or will nature be defective in this? Or must we discover a contrary mode of production to dying?"

"By all means," he said.

"What is this?"

"To revive."

"Therefore," he proceeded, "if there is such a thing  
7 as to revive, will not this reviving be a mode of production from the dead to the living?"

"Certainly."

"Thus, then, we have agreed, that the living are produced from the dead, no less than the dead from the living: but, this being the case, there appears to me sufficient proof that the souls of the dead must necessarily exist somewhere, from whence they are again produced."

"It appears to me, Socrates," he said, "that this must necessarily follow from what has been admitted."

"See now, O Cebes," he said, "that we have not



agreed on these things improperly, as it appears to me : for if one class of things were not constantly given back in the place of another, revolving as it were in a circle, but generation were direct from one thing alone into its opposite, and did not turn round again to the other, or retrace its course, do you know that all things would at length have the same form, be in the same state, and cease to be produced?"

"How say you?" he asked.

"It is by no means difficult," he replied, "to understand what I mean; if, for instance, there should be such a thing as falling asleep, but no reciprocal waking again produced from a state of sleep, you know that at length all things would show the fable of Endymion to be a jest, and it would be thought nothing at all of, because every thing else would be in the same state as him, namely, asleep. And if all things were mingled together, but never separated, that doctrine of Anaxagoras would soon be verified, 'all things would be together.' Likewise, my dear Cebes, if all things that partake of life should die, and after they are dead should remain in this state of death, and not revive again, would it not necessarily follow that at length all things should be dead, and nothing alive? for if living beings are produced from other things, and living beings die, what could prevent their being all absorbed in death?"

"Nothing whatever, I think, Socrates," replied Cebes, "but you appear to me to speak the exact truth."

"For, Cebes," he continued, "as it seems to me, such undoubtedly is the case, and we have not admitted these things under a delusion, but it is in reality true that there is a reviving again, that the living are produced from the dead, that the souls of the dead exist, and that the condition of the good is better, and of the evil, worse."

"And indeed," said Cebes, interrupting him, "according to that doctrine, Socrates, which you are frequently in the habit of advancing, if it is true, that our learning is nothing else than reminiscence, according to this it is surely necessary that we must at some former time have learned what we now remember.

But this is impossible, unless our soul existed somewhere before it came into this human form; so that  
73 from hence also the soul appears to be something immortal."

"But, Cebes," said Simmias, interrupting him, "what proofs are there of these things? remind me of them, for I do not very well remember them at present."

"It is proved," said Cebes, "by one argument, and that a most beautiful one, that men, when questioned, if one questions them properly, of themselves describe all things as they are: however, if they had not innate knowledge and right reason, they would never be able to do this. Moreover, if one leads them to diagrams, or any thing else of the kind, it is then most clearly apparent that this is the case."

"But if you are not persuaded in this way, Simmias," said Socrates, "see if you will agree with us on considering the matter thus. For do you doubt how that which is called learning is reminiscence?"

"I do not doubt," said Simmias, "but I require this very thing of which we are speaking, to be reminded; and indeed, from what Cebes has begun to say, I almost now remember, and am persuaded; nevertheless, however, I should like to hear now how you would attempt to prove it."

"I do it thus," he replied: "we admit surely that if any one be reminded of any thing, he must needs have known that thing at some time or other before."

"Certainly," he said.

"Do we then admit this also, that when knowledge comes in a certain manner it is reminiscence? But the manner I mean is this; if any one, upon seeing or hearing, or perceiving through the medium of any other sense, some particular thing, should not only know that, but also form an idea of something else, of which the knowledge is not the same, but different, should we not justly say, that he remembered that of which he received the idea?"

"How mean you?"

"For instance; the knowledge of a man is different from that of a lyre."

"How not?"

"Do you not know, then, that lovers when they see a lyre, or a garment, or any thing else which their favourite is accustomed to use, are thus affected; they both recognise the lyre, and receive in their minds the form of the person to whom the lyre belonged? This is reminiscence: just as any one, seeing Simmias, is often reminded of Cebes, and so in an infinite number of similar instances."

"An infinite number indeed, by Jupiter," said Simmias.

"Is not then," he said, "something of this sort a kind of reminiscence? especially when one is thus affected with respect to things which, from lapse of time, and not thinking of them, one has now forgotten?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"But what?" he continued, "does it happen, that when one sees a painted horse or a painted lyre, one is reminded of a man, and that when one sees a picture of Simmias one is reminded of Cebes?"

"Certainly."

"And does it not also happen, that on seeing a picture of Simmias one is reminded of Simmias himself?"

"It does indeed," he replied.

"Does it not happen, then, according to all this, that reminiscence arises partly from things like, and partly from things unlike?"

"It does."

"But when one is reminded by things like, is it not necessary that one should be thus further affected, so as to perceive whether, as regards likeness, this falls short or not of the thing of which one has been reminded?"

"It is necessary," he replied.

"Consider, then," said Socrates, "if the case is thus. Do we allow that there is such a thing as equality? I do not mean of one log with another, nor one stone with another, nor any thing else of this kind, but something altogether different from all these,—abstract equality; do we allow that there is any such thing or not?"

"By Jupiter, we most assuredly do allow it," replied Simmias.

"And do we know what it is itself?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Whence have we derived the knowledge of it? Is it not from the things we have just now mentioned, and that from seeing logs, or stones, or other things of the kind, equal, we have from these formed an idea of that which is different from these? for does it not appear to you to be different? Consider the matter thus. Do not stones that are equal, and logs sometimes that are the same, appear at one time equal, and at another not?"

"Certainly."

"But what? does abstract equality ever appear to you unequal? or equality inequality?"

"Never, Socrates, at any time."

"These equal things, then," he said, "and abstract equality, are not the same?"

"By no means, Socrates, as it appears."

"However, from these equal things," he said, "which are different from that abstract equality, have you not formed your idea and derived your knowledge of it?"

"You speak most truly," he replied.

"Is it not, therefore, from its being like or unlike them?"

"Certainly."

"But it makes no difference," he said. "When, therefore, on seeing one thing, you form, from the sight of it, the notion of another, whether like or unlike, this," he said, "must necessarily be reminiscence."

"Certainly."

"What, then, as to this?" he continued; "are we affected in any such way with regard to logs and the equal things we have just now spoken of? and do they appear to us to be equal in the same manner as abstract equality itself is, or do they fall short in some degree, or not at all, of being such as equality itself is?"

"They fall far short," he replied.

"Do we admit, then, that when one, on beholding some particular thing, perceives that it aims, as that

which I now see, at being like something else that exists, but falls short of it, and cannot become such as that is, but is inferior to it. do we admit that he who perceives this must necessarily have had a previous knowledge of that which he says it resembles, though imperfectly?"

"It is necessary."

"What then? are we affected in some such way, or not, with respect to things equal and abstract equality itself?"

"Assuredly."

"It is necessary, therefore, that we must have known abstract equality before the time when on first seeing 75 equal things, we perceived that they all aimed at resembling equality, but failed in doing so."

"Such is the case."

"Moreover, we admit this too, that we perceived this, and could not possibly perceive it by any other means than the sight, or touch, or some other of the senses: for I say the same of them all."

"For they are the same, Socrates, so far as our argument is concerned."

"However, we must perceive by means of the senses, that all things which come under the senses aim at that abstract equality, and yet fall short of it: or how shall we say it is?"

"Even so."

"Before, then, we began to see, and hear, and use our other senses, we must have had a knowledge of equality itself, what it is, if we were to refer to it those equal things that come under the senses, and observe that all such things aim at resembling that, but fall far short of it."

"This necessarily follows, Socrates, from what has been already said."

"But did we not, as soon as we were born, see and hear, and possess our other senses?"

"Certainly."

"But, we have said, before we possessed these, we must have had a knowledge of abstract equality?"

"Yes."

"We must have had it, then, as it seems, before we were born."

"It seems so."

"If, therefore, having this before we were born, we were born possessing it, we knew both before we were born, and as soon as we were born, not only the equal and the greater and smaller, but all things of the kind; for our present discussion is not more respecting equality than the beautiful itself, the good, the just, and the holy, and in one word, respecting every thing which we mark with the seal of existence, both in the questions we ask, and the answers we give. So that we must necessarily have had a knowledge of all these before we were born."

"Such is the case."

"And if, having once had it, we did not constantly forget it, we should always be born with this knowledge, and should always retain it through life: for to know is this, when one has got a knowledge of any thing, to retain and not lose it; for do we not call this oblivion, Simmias, the loss of knowledge?"

"Assuredly, Socrates," he replied.

"But if, having had it before we were born, we lose it at our birth, and afterwards, through exercising the senses about these things, we recover the knowledge which we once before possessed, would not that which we call learning be a recovery of our own knowledge? and in saying that this is to remember should we not say rightly?"

"Certainly."

- 76 "For this appeared to be possible, for one having perceived any thing, either by seeing or hearing, or employing any other sense, to form an idea of something different from this, which he had forgotten, and with which this was connected by being unlike or like. So that, as I said, one of these two things must follow, either we are all born with this knowledge, and we retain it through life, or those whom we say learn afterwards do nothing else but remember, and this learning will be reminiscence."

"Such certainly is the case, Socrates."

"Which, then, do you choose, Simmias : that we are born with knowledge, or that we afterwards remember what we had formerly known? "

"At present, Socrates, I am unable to choose? "

"But what? are you able to choose in this case, and what do you think about it? Can a man, who possesses knowledge, give a reason for the things that he knows, or not? "

"He needs must be able to do so, Socrates," he replied.

"And do all men appear to you, to be able to give a reason for the things of which we have just now been speaking? "

"I wish they could," said Simmias; "but I am much more afraid, that at this time to-morrow, there will no longer be any one able to do this properly."

"Do not all men then, Simmias," he said, "seem to you to know these things? "

"By no means."

"Do they remember, then, what they once learned? "

"Necessarily so."

"When did our souls receive this knowledge? not surely, since we were born into the world."

"Assuredly not."

"Before, then? "

"Yes."

"Our souls therefore, Simmias, existed before they were in a human form, separate from bodies, and possessed intelligence."

"Unless, Socrates, we receive this knowledge at our birth, for this period yet remains."

"Be it so, my friend. But at what other time do we lose it? for we are not born with it, as we have just now admitted. Do we lose it then at the very time in which we receive it? Or can you mention any other time? "

"By no means, Socrates : I was not aware that I was saying nothing to the purpose."

"Does the case then stand thus with us, Simmias," he proceeded. "If those things which we are continually talking about really exist, the beautiful, the

good, and every such essence, and to this we refer all things that come under the senses, as finding it to have a prior existence, and to be our own, and if we compare these things to it, it necessarily follows, that as these exist, so likewise our soul exists even before we are born; but if these do not exist this discussion will have been undertaken in vain. Is it not so? and is there not an equal necessity, both that these things should exist, and our souls also before we are born, and if not the former neither the latter?"

77 "Most assuredly, Socrates," said Simmias, "there appears to me to be the same necessity, and the argument admirably tends to prove that our souls exist before we are born, just as that essence does which you have now mentioned. For I hold nothing so clear to me as this, that all such things most certainly exist, as the beautiful, the good, and all the rest that you just now spoke of; and as far as I am concerned the case is sufficiently demonstrated."

"But how does it appear to Cebes?" said Socrates: "for it is necessary to persuade Cebes too."

"He is sufficiently persuaded, I think," said Simmias, "although he is the most pertinacious of men in distrusting arguments. Yet I think he is sufficiently persuaded of this, that our soul existed before we were born. But whether when we are dead, it will still exist, does not appear to me to have been demonstrated, Socrates," he continued, "but that popular doubt, which Cebes just now mentioned, still stands in our way, whether, when a man dies, the soul is not dispersed, and this is the end of its existence. For what hinders its being born, and formed from some other source, and existing before it came into a human body, and yet when it has come, and is separated from this body, its then also dying itself, and being destroyed?"

"You say well, Simmias," said Cebes; "for it appears that only one half of what is necessary has been demonstrated, namely, that our soul existed before we were born: but it is necessary to demonstrate further, that when we are dead, it will exist no less than before we were born, if the demonstration is to be made complete."



"This has been even now demonstrated, Simmias and Cebes," said Socrates, "if you will only connect this last argument with that which we before assented to, that every thing living is produced from that which is dead. For if the soul exists before, and it is necessary for it when it enters into life, and is born, to be produced from nothing else than death, and from being dead, how is it not necessary for it also to exist after death, since it must needs be produced again? What you require, then, has been already demonstrated. However, both you and Simmias appear to me as if you wished to sift this argument more thoroughly, and to be afraid like children, lest on the soul's departure from the body the winds should blow it away and disperse it, especially if one should happen to die not in a calm, but in a violent storm."

Upon this Cebes, smiling, said, "Endeavour to teach us better, Socrates, as if we were afraid, or rather not as if we were afraid, though perhaps there is some boy within us who has such a dread. Let us, then, endeavour to persuade him not to be afraid of death, as of hobgoblins."

"But you must charm him every day," said Socrates, "until you have quieted his fears."

"But whence, Socrates," he said, "can we procure a 78 skilful charmer for such a case, now that you are about to leave us?"

"Greece is wide, Cebes," he replied, "and in it surely there are skilful men, there are also many barbarous nations, all of which you should search through, seeking such a charmer, sparing neither money nor toil, as there is nothing on which you can more seasonably spend your money. You should also seek for him among yourselves; for perhaps you could not easily find any more competent than yourselves to do this."

"This shall be done," said Cebes, "but, if it is agreeable to you, let us return to the point from whence we digressed."

"It will be agreeable to me, for how should it not?"

"You say well," rejoined Cebes.

"We ought then," said Socrates, "to ask ourselves

some such question as this, to what kind of thing it appertains to be thus affected, namely to be dispersed, and for what we ought to fear, lest it should be so affected, and for what not. And after this, we should consider which of the two the soul is; and in the result should either be confident or fearful for our soul."

"You speak truly," said he.

"Does it not, then, appertain to that which is formed by composition, and is naturally compounded, to be thus affected, to be dissolved in the same manner as that in which it was compounded; and if there is any thing not compounded, does it not appertain to this alone, if to any thing, not to be thus affected?"

"It appears to me to be so," said Cebes.

"Is it not most probable then that things which are always the same, and in the same state, are uncompounded, but that things which are constantly changing, and are never in the same state, are compounded?"

"To me it appears so."

"Let us return then," he said, "to the subjects on which we before discoursed. Whether is essence itself, of which we gave this account that it exists, both in our questions and answers, always the same, or does it sometimes change? Does equality itself, the beautiful itself, and each several thing which is, ever undergo any change, however small? Or does each of them which exists, being an unmixed essence by itself, continue always the same, and in the same state, and never undergo any variation at all under any circumstances?"

"They must of necessity continue the same and in the same state, Socrates," said Cebes.

"But what shall we say of the many beautiful things, such as men, horses, garments, or other things of the kind, whether equal, or beautiful, or of all things synonymous with them? Do they continue the same, or, quite contrary to the former, are they never at any time, so to say, the same, either with respect to themselves or one another?"

"These, on the other hand," replied Cebes, "never continue the same."

79 "These then you can touch, or see, or perceive by

the other senses ; but those that continue the same, you cannot apprehend in any other way than by the exercise of thought ; for such things are invisible, and are not seen ? ”

“ You say what is strictly true,” replied Cebes.

“ We may assume then, if you please,” he continued, “ that there are two species of things, the one visible, the other invisible ? ”

“ We may,” he said.

“ And the invisible always continuing the same, but the visible never the same ? ”

“ This too,” he said, “ we may assume.”

“ Come then,” he asked, “ is there any thing else belonging to us, than on the one hand body, and on the other soul ? ”

“ Nothing else,” he replied.

“ To which species, then, shall we say the body is more like, and more nearly allied ? ”

“ It is clear to every one,” he said, “ that it is to the visible.”

“ But what of the soul ? Is it visible or invisible ? ”

“ It is not visible to men, Socrates,” he replied.

“ But we speak of things which are visible or not so to the nature of men : or to some other nature, think you ? ”

“ To that of men.”

“ What then shall we say of the soul, that it is visible, or not visible ? ”

“ Not visible.”

“ Is it then invisible ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ The soul then is more like the invisible than the body, and the body, the visible ? ”

“ It must needs be so, Socrates.”

“ And did we not some time since say this too, that the soul, when it employs the body to examine any thing, either by means of the sight or hearing, or any other sense, (for to examine any thing by means of the body is to do so by the senses,) is then drawn by the body to things that never continue the same, and wanders and is confused, and reels as if intoxicated

through coming into contact with things of this kind?"

"Certainly."

"But when it examines any thing by itself, does it approach that which is pure, eternal, immortal, and unchangeable, and, as being allied to it, continue constantly with it, so long as it subsists by itself, and has the power, and does it cease from its wandering, and constantly continue the same with respect to those things, through coming into contact with things of this kind? and is this affection of the soul called wisdom?"

"You speak," he said, "in every respect, well and truly, Socrates."

"To which species of the two, then, both from what was before, and now said, does the soul appear to you to be more like and more nearly allied?"

"Every one; I think, would allow, Socrates," he replied, "even the dullest person, from this method of reasoning that the soul is in every respect more like that which continues constantly the same, than that which does not so."

"But what as to the body?"

"It is more like the other."

"Consider it also thus, that, when soul and body are  
80 together, nature enjoins the latter to be subservient and obey, the former to rule and exercise dominion. And in this way, which of the two appears to you to be like the divine, and which the mortal? Does it not appear to you to be natural that the divine should rule and command, but the mortal obey and be subservient?"

"To me it does so."

"Which, then, does the soul resemble?"

"It is clear, Socrates, that the soul resembles the divine, but the body, the mortal."

"Consider then, Cebes," said he, "whether, from all that has been said, these conclusions follow, that the soul is most like that which is divine, immortal, intelligent, uniform, indissoluble, and which always continues in the same state, but that the body on the other hand is most like that which is human, mortal, unintelligent, multiform, dissoluble, and which never continues in the

same state. Can we say any thing against this, my dear Cebes, to show that it is not so?"

"We cannot."

"What then? Since these things are so, does it not appertain to the body to be quickly dissolved, but to the soul, on the contrary, to be altogether indissoluble, or nearly so?"

"How not?"

"You perceive, however," he said, "that when a man dies, the visible part of him, the body, which is exposed to sight, and which we call a corpse, to which it appertains to be dissolved, to fall asunder and be dispersed, does not immediately undergo any of these affections, but remains for a considerable time, and especially so if any one should die with his body in full vigour, and at a corresponding age; for when the body has collapsed and been embalmed, as those that are embalmed in Egypt, it remains almost entire for an incredible length of time; and some parts of the body, even though it does decay, such as the bones and nerves, and every thing of that kind, are nevertheless, as one may say, immortal. Is it not so?"

"Yes."

"Can the soul, then, which is invisible, and which goes to another place like itself, excellent, pure, and invisible, and therefore truly called the invisible world, to the presence of a good and wise God, (whither if God will, my soul also must shortly go,) can this soul of ours, I ask, being such and of such a nature, when separated from the body be immediately dispersed and destroyed, as most men assert? Far from it, my dear Cebes and Simmias. But the case is much rather thus; if it is separated in a pure state, taking nothing of the body with it, as not having willingly communicated with it in the present life, but having shunned it and gathered itself within itself, as constantly studying this; but this is nothing else than to pursue philosophy aright, and in reality to study how to die easily; would not this be to study how to die?"

"Most assuredly."

"Does not the soul, then, when in this state, depart

to that which resembles itself, the invisible, the divine, immortal, and wise? and on its arrival there, is it not its lot to be happy, free from error, ignorance, fears, wild passions, and all the other evils to which human nature is subject, and, as is said of the initiated, does it not in truth pass the rest of its time with the gods? Must we affirm that it is so, Cebes, or otherwise?"

"So, by Jupiter," said Cebes.

"But, I think, if it departs from the body polluted and impure, as having constantly held communion with the body, and having served and loved it, and been bewitched by it, through desires and pleasures, so as to think that there is nothing real except what is corporeal, which one can touch and see, and drink and eat, and employ for sensual purposes; but what is dark and invisible to the eyes, which is intellectual and apprehended by philosophy, having been accustomed to hate, fear, and shun this, do you think that a soul thus affected can depart from the body by itself, and uncontaminated?"

"By no means whatever," he replied.

"But I think it will be impressed with that which is corporeal, which the intercourse and communion of the body, through constant association and great attention, have made natural to it."

"Certainly."

"We must think, my dear Cebes, that this is ponderous and heavy, earthly and visible, by possessing which such a soul is weighed down, and drawn again into the visible world through dread of the invisible and of Hades, wandering, as it is said, amongst monuments and tombs, about which, indeed, certain shadowy phantoms of souls have been seen, being such images as those souls produced which have not departed pure from the body, but which partake of the visible, on which account also they are visible."

"That is probable, Socrates."

"Probable indeed, Cebes; and not that these are the souls of the good, but of the wicked, which are compelled to wander about such places, paying the penalty of their former conduct, which was evil; and they

wander about so long, until, through the desire of the corporeal nature that accompanies them, they are again united to a body; and they are united, as is probable, to animals having the same habits as those they have given themselves up to during life."

"But what do you say these are, Socrates?"

"For instance, those who have given themselves up to gluttony, wantonness, and drinking, and having put no restraint on themselves, will probably be clothed in the form of asses and brutes of that kind. Do you not <sup>82</sup> think so?"

"You say what is very probable."

"And that such as have set great value on injustice, tyranny, and rapine, will be clothed in the species of wolves, hawks, and kites? Where else can we say such souls go?"

"Without doubt," said Cebes, "into such as these."

"Is it not then evident," he continued, "as to the rest, whither each will go, according to the resemblances of their several pursuits?"

"It is evident," he replied, "how not?"

"Of these, then," he said, "are not they the most happy, and do they not go to the best place, who have practised that social and civilized virtue, which they call temperance and justice, and which is produced from habit and exercise, without philosophy and reflection?"

"In what respect are these the most happy?"

"Because it is probable that these should again migrate into a corresponding civilized and peaceable kind of animals, such as bees perhaps, or wasps, or ants, or even into the same human species again, and from these become moderate men."

"It is probable."

"But it is not lawful for any one, who has not studied philosophy and departed this life perfectly pure, to pass into the rank of gods, but only for the true lover of wisdom. And on this account, my friends Simmias and Cebes, those who philosophize rightly abstain from all bodily desires, and persevere in doing so, and do not give themselves up to them, not fearing the loss of property and poverty, as the generality of men and the

lovers of wealth; nor again dreading disgrace and ignominy like those who are lovers of power and honour, do they then abstain from them."

"For it would not become them to do so, Socrates," says Cebes.

"It would not, by Jupiter," he rejoined. "Wherefore, Cebes, they who care at all for their soul, and do not spend their lives in the culture of their bodies, despising all these, proceed not in the same way with them, as being ignorant whither they are going, but being convinced that they ought not to act contrary to philosophy, but in accordance with the freedom and purification she affords, they give themselves up to her direction, following her wherever she leads."

"How, Socrates?"

"I will tell you," he replied. "The lovers of wisdom know, that philosophy receiving their soul plainly bound and glued to the body, and compelled to view things through this, as through a prison, and not directly by herself, and sunk in utter ignorance, and perceiving too the strength of the prison, that it arises from desire, so that he that is bound as much as possible assists in  
83 binding himself. I say, then, the lovers of wisdom know that philosophy, receiving their soul in this state, gently exhorts it, and endeavours to free it, by showing that the view of things by means of the eyes is full of deception, as also is that through the ears and the other senses, persuading an abandonment of these so far as it is not absolutely necessary to use them, and advising the soul to be collected and concentrated within itself, and to believe nothing else but herself, with respect to what she herself understands of things that have a real subsistence, and to consider nothing true which she views through the medium of others, and which differ under different aspects; for that a thing of this kind is sensible and visible, but that what she herself perceives is intelligible and invisible. The soul of the true philosopher, therefore, thinking that she ought not to oppose this deliverance, accordingly abstains as much as possible from pleasures and desires, griefs and fears, considering that when any one,



is exceedingly delighted or alarmed, grieved or influenced by desire, he does not merely suffer such evil from these things as one might suppose, such as either being sick or wasting his property, through indulging his desires; but that which is the greatest evil, and the worst of all, this he suffers and is not conscious of it."

"But what is this evil, Socrates?" said Cebes.

"That the soul of every man is compelled to be either vehemently delighted or grieved about some particular thing, and at the same time to consider that the thing about which it is thus strongly affected is most real and most true, though it is not so. But these are chiefly visible objects; are they not?"

"Certainly."

"In this state of affection, then, is not the soul especially shackled by the body?"

"How so?"

"Because each pleasure and pain, having a nail as it were, nails the soul to the body, and fastens it to it, and causes it to become corporeal, deeming those things to be true whatever the body asserts to be so. For, in consequence of its forming the same opinions with the body, and delighting in the same things, it is compelled, I think, to possess similar manners, and to be similarly nourished, so that it can never pass into Hades in a pure state, but must ever depart polluted by the body, and so quickly falls again into another body, and grows up as if it were sown, and consequently is deprived of all association with that which is divine, and pure, and uniform."

"You speak most truly, Socrates," said Cebes.

"For these reasons, therefore, Cebes, those who are truly lovers of wisdom are moderate and resolute, and not for the reasons that most people say. Do you think as they do?"

"Assuredly not."

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"No, truly. But the soul of a philosopher would reason thus, and would not think that philosophy ought to set it free, and that when it is freed it should give itself up again to pleasures and pains, to bind it down again, and make her work void, weaving a kind of

Penelope's web the reverse way. On the contrary, effecting a calm of the passions, and following the guidance of reason, and being always intent on this, contemplating that which is true and divine, and not subject to opinion, and being nourished by it, it thinks that it ought to live in this manner as long as it does live, and that when it dies it shall go to a kindred essence, and one like itself, and shall be freed from human evils. From such a regimen as this the soul has no occasion to fear, Simmias and Cebes, while it strictly attends to these things, lest being torn to pieces at its departure from the body it should be blown about and dissipated by the winds, and no longer have an existence any where."

When Socrates had thus spoken, a long silence ensued; and Socrates himself was pondering upon what had been said, as he appeared, and so did most of us: but Cebes and Simmias were conversing a little while with each other. At length Socrates perceiving them, said, "What think you of what has been said? does it appear to you to have been proved sufficiently? for many doubts and objections still remain if any one will examine them thoroughly. If, then, you are considering some other subject, I have nothing to say; but if you are doubting about this, do not hesitate both yourselves to speak and express your opinion, if it appears to you in any respect that it might have been argued better, and to call me in again to your assistance, if you think you can be at all benefited by my help."

Upon this Simmias said, "Indeed, Socrates, I will tell you the truth: for some time each of us, being in doubt, has been urging and exhorting the other to question you, from a desire to hear our doubts solved, but we were afraid of giving you trouble, lest it should be disagreeable to you in your present circumstances."

But he, upon hearing this, gently smiled, and said, "Bless me, Simmias; with difficulty indeed, could I persuade other men that I do not consider my present condition a calamity, since I am not able to persuade even you; but you are afraid lest I should be more morose now than during the former part of my life.

And, as it seems, I appear to you to be inferior to swans with respect to divination, who, when they perceive that they must needs die, though they have been used to sing before, sing then more than ever, rejoicing that they are about to depart to that deity whose servants they are. But men, through their own fear of death, belie the swans too, and say that they, lamenting their death, sing their last song through grief, and they do not consider that no bird sings when it is hungry or cold, or is afflicted with any other pain, not even the nightingale, or swallow, or the hoopoes, which they say sing lamenting through grief. But neither do these birds appear to me to sing through sorrow, nor yet do swans; but in my opinion, belonging to Apollo, they are prophetic, and foreseeing the blessings of Hades, they sing and rejoice on that day more excellently than at any preceding time. But I too consider myself to be a fellow-servant of the swans, and sacred to the same god, and that I have received the power of divination from our common master no less than they, and that I do not depart from this life with less spirits than they. On this account, therefore, it is right that you should both speak and ask whatever you please, as long as the Athenian Eleven permit."

"You say well," said Simmias, "and both I will tell you what are my doubts, and he in turn how far he does not assent to what has been said. For it appears to me, Socrates, probably as it does to you with respect to these matters, that to know them clearly in the present life is either impossible, or very difficult; on the other hand, however, not to test what has been said of them in every possible way, so as not to desist until on examining them in every point of view, one has exhausted every effort, is the part of a very weak man. For we ought with respect to these things, either to learn from others how they stand, or to discover them for one's-self, or, if both these are impossible, then, taking the best of human reasonings and that which is the most difficult to be confuted, and embarking on this, as one who risks himself on a raft, so to sail through life, unless one could be carried more safely, and with

less risk, on a surer conveyance or some divine reason. I, therefore, shall not now be ashamed to question you, since you bid me do so, nor shall I blame myself hereafter, for not having now told you what I think; for to me, Socrates, when I consider the matter, both with myself and with Cebes, what has been said does not appear to have been sufficiently proved."

Then said Socrates, "Perhaps, my friend, you have the truth on your side; but tell me in what respect it was not sufficiently proved."

"In this," he answered, "because any one might use the same argument with respect to harmony, and a lyre, and its chords, that harmony is something invisible and incorporeal, very beautiful and divine, in a well-  
 86 modulated lyre: but the lyre and its chords are bodies, and of corporeal form, compounded and earthly, and akin to that which is mortal. When any one, then, has either broken the lyre, or cut or burst the chords, he might maintain from the same reasoning as yours, that it is necessary the harmony should still exist and not be destroyed; for there could be no possibility that the lyre should subsist any longer when the chords are burst, and that the chords which are of a mortal nature should subsist, but that the harmony, which is of the same nature and akin to that which is divine and immortal, should become extinct, and perish before that which is mortal; but he might say that the harmony must needs subsist somewhere, and that the wood and chords must decay, before it can undergo any change. For I think, Socrates, that you yourself have arrived at this conclusion, that we consider the soul to be pretty much of this kind, namely, that our body being compacted and held together by heat and cold, dryness and moisture, and other such qualities, our soul is the fusion and harmony of these, when they are well and duly combined with each other. If then, the soul is a kind of harmony, it is evident that when our body is unduly relaxed or strained through diseases and other maladies, the soul must of necessity immediately perish, although it is most divine, just as other harmonies which subsist in sounds or in the various works of artificers, but that

the remains of the body of each person last for a long time, till they are either burnt or decayed. Consider then what we shall say to this reasoning, if any one should maintain that the soul being a fusion of the several qualities in the body, perishes first in that which is called death."

Socrates, therefore, looking steadfastly at us, as he was generally accustomed to do, and smiling, said, "Simmias indeed speaks justly. If then, any one of you is more prompt than I am, why does he not answer? for he seems to have handled my argument not badly. It appears to me, however, that before we make our reply we should first hear from Cebes, what he too objects to our argument, in order that, some time intervening, we may consider what we shall say, and then when we have heard them, we may give up to them, if they appear to speak agreeably to truth, or if not, we may then uphold our own argument. Come then, Cebes," he continued, "say what it is that disturbs you, so as to cause your unbelief."

"I will tell you," said Cebes; "the argument seems to me to rest where it was, and to be liable to the same objection that we mentioned before. For, that our soul <sup>87</sup> existed even before it came into this present form, I do not deny has been very elegantly, and, if it is not too much to say so, very fully demonstrated: but that it still exists any where when we are dead, does not appear to me to have been clearly proved; nor do I give in to the objection of Simmias, that the soul is not stronger and more durable than the body, for it appears to me to excel very far all things of this kind. 'Why then,' reason might say, 'do you still disbelieve? for, since you see that when a man dies his weaker part still exists, does it not appear to you to be necessary that the more durable part should still be preserved during this period?' Consider then, whether I say any thing to the purpose in reply to this. For I too, as well as Simmias, as it seems, stand in need of an illustration: for the argument appears to me to have been put thus, as if any one should advance this argument about an aged weaver who had died, that the man has not yet

perished, but perhaps still exists somewhere; and as a proof, should exhibit the garment which he wore and had woven himself, that it is entire and has not perished; and if any one should disbelieve him he would ask, whether of the two is the more durable, the species of a man or of a garment, that is constantly in use and being worn; then should any one answer, that the species of man is much more durable, he would think it demonstrated, that beyond all question the man is preserved, since that which is less durable has not perished. But I do not think, Simmias, that this is the case, and do you consider what I say, for every one must think that he who argues thus argues foolishly. For this weaver, having worn and woven many such garments, perished after almost all of them, but before the last I suppose, and yet it does not on this account follow any the more that a man is inferior to or weaker than a garment. And I think the soul might admit this same illustration with respect to the body, and he who should say the same things concerning them would appear to me to speak correctly, that the soul is more durable, but the body weaker and less durable; for he would say that each soul wears out many bodies, especially if it lives many years; for, if the body wastes and is dissolved while the man still lives, but the soul continually weaves anew what is worn out, it must necessarily follow that when the soul is dissolved it must then have on its last garment, and perish before this alone; but when the soul has perished the body would show the weakness of its nature, and quickly rot and vanish. So that it is not by any means right to place implicit reliance on this argument, and to believe that when we die our soul

88 still exists somewhere. For, if any one should concede to him who admits even more than you do, and should grant to him that not only did our soul exist before we were born, but that even when we die nothing hinders the souls of some of us from still existing, and continuing to exist hereafter, and from being often born, and dying again; for so strong is it by nature, that it can hold out against repeated births; if he granted this, he would not yet concede that it does not exhaust itself in

its many births, and at length perish altogether in some one of the deaths. But he would say that no one knows this death and dissolution of the body, which brings destruction to the soul; for it is impossible for any one of us to perceive it. If, however, this be the case, it follows that every one who is confident at the approach of death is foolishly confident, unless he is able to prove that the soul is absolutely immortal and imperishable: otherwise it necessarily follows that he who is about to die must be alarmed for his soul, lest in its present disunion from the body it should entirely perish."

Upon this, all of us who had heard them speaking were disagreeably affected, as we afterwards mentioned to each other; because, after we had been fully persuaded by the former arguments, they seemed to disturb us anew, and to cast us into a distrust, not only of the arguments already adduced, but of such as might afterwards be urged, for fear lest we should not be fit judges of any thing, or lest the things themselves should be incredible.

*Ech.* By the gods, Phædo, I can readily excuse you: for, while I am now hearing you, it occurs to me to ask myself some such question as this, What arguments can we any longer believe? since the argument which Socrates advanced, and which was exceedingly credible, has now fallen into discredit. For this argument, that our soul is a kind of harmony, produces a wonderful impression on me, both now and always, and in being mentioned, it has reminded me, as it were, that I too was formerly of the same opinion: so that I stand in need again, as if from the very beginning, of some other argument which may persuade me that the soul of one who dies does not die with the body. Tell me therefore, by Jupiter, how Socrates followed up the argument; and whether he too, as you confess was the case with yourselves, seemed disconcerted at all, or not, but calmly maintained his position; and maintained it sufficiently, or defectively. Relate every thing to me as accurately as you can.

*Phæd.* Indeed, Echecrates, though I have often admired Socrates, I was never more delighted than at

being with him on that occasion. That he should be  
 89 able to say something is perhaps not at all surprising;  
 but I especially admired this in him, first of all that he  
 listened to the argument of the young men so sweetly,  
 affably, and approvingly; in the next place, that he so  
 quickly perceived how we were affected by their argu-  
 ments; and lastly, that he cured us so well and recalled  
 us, when we were put to flight as it were and van-  
 quished, and encouraged us to accompany him, and  
 consider the argument with him.

*Ech.* How was that?

*Phæd.* I will tell you: I happened to be sitting at his  
 right hand, near the bed, upon a low seat, but he himself  
 sat much higher than I. Stroking my head, then, and  
 laying hold of the hair that hung on my neck, for he  
 used, often, to play with my hairs, "To-morrow," he  
 said, "perhaps, Phædo, you will cut off these beautiful  
 locks?"

"It seems likely, Socrates," said I.

"Not if you are persuaded by me."

"Why so?" I asked.

"To-day," he replied, "both I ought to cut off mine  
 and you yours, if our argument must die, and we are  
 unable to revive it. And I, if I were you, and the argu-  
 ments were to escape me, would take an oath, as the  
 Argives do, not to suffer my hair to grow until I had  
 renewed the contest, and vanquished the arguments of  
 Simmias and Cebes."

"But," I said, "even Hercules himself is said not to  
 have been a match for two."

"Call upon me, then," he said, "as your Iolaus, while  
 it is yet day."

"I do call on you, then," I said, "not as Hercules  
 upon Iolaus, but as Iolaus upon Hercules."

"It will make no difference," he replied. "But first  
 of all we must beware lest we meet with some mis-  
 chance."

"What?" I asked.

"That we do not become," he answered, "haters of  
 reasoning as some become haters of men; for no greater  
 evil can happen to any one than to hate reasoning.



But hatred of reasoning and hatred of mankind both spring from the same source. For hatred of mankind is produced in us from having placed too great reliance on some one without sufficient knowledge of him, and from having considered him to be a man altogether true, sincere, and faithful, and then after a little while finding him depraved and unfaithful, and after him another. And when a man has often experienced this, and especially from those whom he considered his most intimate and best friends, at length, having frequently stumbled, he hates all men, and thinks that there is no soundness at all in any of them. Have you not perceived that this happens so?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Is it not a shame?" he said, "and is it not evident that such a one attempts to deal with men, without sufficient knowledge of human affairs? For if he had dealt with them with competent knowledge, as the case really is, so he would have considered that the good and the bad are each very few in number, and that those between both are most numerous."

"How say you?" I asked.

"In the same manner," he replied, "as with things very little and very large. Do you think that any thing is more rare than to find a very large or a very little man, or dog, or any thing else? and again swift or slow, beautiful or ugly, white or black? Do you not perceive that of all such things the extremes are rare 90 and few, but that the intermediate are abundant and numerous?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Do you not think, then," he continued, "that if a contest in wickedness were proposed, even here very few would be found pre-eminent?"

"It is probable," I said.

"It is so," he said; "but in this respect reasonings do not resemble men, for I was just now following you as my leader, but in this they do resemble them, when any one believes in any argument as true without being skilled in the art of reasoning, and then shortly afterwards it appears to him to be false, at one time being

so and at another time not, and so on with one after another; and especially they who devote themselves to controversial arguments, you are aware at length that they have become very wise, and have alone discovered that there is nothing sound and stable either in things or reasonings, but that all things that exist, as is the case with the Euripus, are in a constant state of flux and reflux, and never continue in any one condition for any length of time."

"You speak perfectly true," I said.

"Would it not then, Phædo," he said, "be a sad thing if, when there is a true and sound reasoning, and such as one can understand, one should then, through lighting upon such arguments as appear to be at one time true, and at another false, not blame one's-self and one's own want of skill, but at length through grief should anxiously transfer the blame from one's-self to the arguments, and thereupon pass the rest of one's life in hating and reviling arguments, and so be deprived of the truth and knowledge of things that exist?"

"By Jupiter," I said, "it would be sad indeed."

"In the first place, then," he said, "let us beware of this, and let us not admit into our souls the notion that there appears to be nothing sound in reasoning, but much rather that we are not yet in a sound condition, and that we ought vigorously and strenuously to endeavour to become sound, you and the others on account of your whole future life, but I on account of  
91 my death, since I am in danger at the present time of not behaving as becomes a philosopher with respect to this very subject, but as a wrangler like those who are utterly uninformed. For they, when they dispute about any thing, care nothing at all for the subject about which the discussion is, but are anxious about this, that what they have themselves advanced shall appear true to the persons present. And I seem to myself on the present occasion to differ from them only in this respect; for I shall not be anxious to make what I say appear true to those who are present, except that may happen by the way, but that it may appear certainly

to be so to myself. For I thus reason, my dear friend, and observe how interestedly, if what I say be true, it is well to be persuaded of it; but if nothing remains to one that is dead, I shall at least during the interval before death, be less disagreeable to those present by my lamentations. But this ignorance of mine will not continue long, for that would be bad, but will shortly be put an end to. Thus prepared then, Simmias and Cebes," he continued, "I now proceed to my argument. Do you however, if you will be persuaded by me, pay little attention to Socrates, but much more to the truth, and if I appear to you to say any thing true, assent to it, but if not, oppose me with all your might, taking good care that in my zeal I do not deceive both myself and you, and like a bee depart leaving my sting behind.

"But let us proceed," he said; "first of all, remind me of what you said, if I should appear to have forgotten it. For Simmias, as I think, is in doubt and fears lest the soul, though more divine and beautiful than the body, should perish before it, as being a species of harmony. But Cebes appeared to me to grant me this, that the soul is more durable than the body, but he argued that it is uncertain to every one, whether when the soul has worn out many bodies, and that repeatedly, it does not, on leaving the last body, itself also perish, so that this very thing is death, the destruction of the soul, since the body never ceases decaying. Are not these the things, Simmias and Cebes, which we have to inquire into?"

They both agreed that they were.

"Whether then," he continued, "do you reject all our former arguments, or some of them only, and not others?"

"Some we do," they replied, "and others not."

"What then," he proceeded, "do you say about that argument, in which we asserted that knowledge is reminiscence, and that, this being the case, our soul must necessarily have existed somewhere before it was enclosed in the body?"

"I, indeed," replied Cebes, "was both then wonder-

fully persuaded by it, and now persist in it, as in no other argument."

"And I too," said Simmias, "am of the same mind, and should very much wonder if I should ever think otherwise on that point."

"Then," Socrates said, "you must needs think otherwise, my Theban friend, if this opinion holds good, that harmony is something compounded, and that the soul is a kind of harmony that results from the parts compacted together in the body. For surely you will not allow yourself to say that harmony was composed prior to the things from which it required to be composed. Would you allow this?"

"By no means, Socrates," he replied.

"Do you perceive then," he said, "that this results from what you say, when you assert that the soul existed before it came into a human form and body, but that it was composed from things that did not yet exist? For harmony is not such as that to which you compare it; but first the lyre, and the chords, and the sounds yet unharmonized, exist, and last of all harmony is produced, and first perishes. How then will this argument accord with that?"

"Not at all," said Simmias.

"And yet," he said, "if in any argument, there ought to be an accordance in one respecting harmony."

"There ought," said Simmias.

"This of yours however," he said, "is not in accordance. Consider then, which of these two statements do you prefer, that knowledge is reminiscence, or the soul harmony?"

"The former, by far, Socrates," he replied, "for the latter occurred to me without demonstration, through a certain probability and speciousness whence most men derive their opinions. But I am well aware that arguments which draw their demonstrations from probabilities are idle; and unless one is on one's guard against them, they are very deceptive, both in geometry and all other subjects. But the argument respecting reminiscence and knowledge may be said to have been demonstrated by a satisfactory hypothesis. For in this way

it was said that our soul existed before it came into the body, because the essence that bears the appellation of 'that which is,' belongs to it. But of this, as I persuade myself, I am fully and rightly convinced. It is therefore necessary, as it seems, that I should neither allow myself nor any one else to maintain that the soul is harmony."

"But what, Simmias," said he, "if you consider it thus? Does it appear to you to appertain to harmony, or to any other composition, to subsist in any other way than the very things do of which it is composed?" 93

"By no means."

"And indeed, as I think, neither to do any thing, nor suffer any thing else, besides what they do or suffer."

He agreed.

"It does not, therefore, appertain to harmony to take the lead of the things of which it is composed, but to follow them."

He assented.

"It is then far from being the case that harmony is moved or sends forth sounds contrariwise, or is in any other respect opposed to its parts?"

"Far indeed," he said.

"What then? is not every harmony naturally harmony, so far as it has been made to accord?"

"I do not understand you," he replied.

"Whether," he said, "if it should be in a greater degree and more fully to accord, supposing that were possible, would the harmony be greater and more full, but if in a less degree and less fully, then would it be inferior and less full?"

"Certainly."

"Is this then the case with the soul, that, even in the smallest extent, one soul is more fully and in a greater degree, or less fully and in a less degree this very thing, a soul, than another?"

"In no respect whatever," he replied.

"Well then," he said, "by Jupiter, is one soul said to possess intelligence and virtue, and to be good, and another folly and vice, and to be bad? and is this said with truth?"

"With truth, certainly."

"Of those, then, who maintain that the soul is harmony, what will any one say that these things are in the soul, virtue and vice? Will he call them another kind of harmony and discord? and say that the one, the good soul, is harmonized, and, being harmony, contains within itself another harmony, but that the other is discordant, and does not contain within itself another harmony?"

"I am unable to say," replied Simmias, "but it is clear that he who maintains that opinion would say something of the kind."

"But it has been already granted," said he, "that one soul is not more or less a soul than another; and this is an admission that one harmony is not to a greater degree or more fully, or to a less degree or less fully, a harmony, than another: is it not so?"

"Certainly."

"And that that which is neither more nor less harmony, is neither more nor less harmonized: is it so?"

"It is."

"But does that which is neither more nor less harmonized partake of more or less harmony, or an equal amount?"

"An equal amount."

"A soul, therefore, since it is not more or less this very thing, a soul, than another, is not more or less harmonized?"

"Even so."

"Such then being its condition, it cannot partake of a greater degree of discord or harmony?"

"Certainly not."

"And again, such being its condition, can one soul partake of a greater degree of vice or virtue than another, if vice be discord, and virtue harmony?"

"It cannot."

94 "Or rather, surely, Simmias, according to right reason, no soul will partake of vice, if it is harmony: for doubtless harmony, which is perfectly such, can never partake of discord?"

"Certainly not."

"Neither, therefore, can a soul, which is perfectly a soul, partake of vice."

"How can it, from what has been already said?"

"From this reasoning, then, all souls of all animals will be equally good, if at least they are by nature equally this very thing, souls?"

"It appears so to me, Socrates," he said.

"And does it appear to you," he said, "to have been thus rightly argued, and that the argument would lead to this result, if the hypothesis were correct, that the soul is harmony?"

"On no account whatever," he replied.

"But what," said he, "of all the things that are in man, is there any thing else that you say bears rule except the soul, especially if it be wise?"

"I should say not."

"Whether by yielding to the passions in the body, or by opposing them? My meaning is this: for instance, when heat and thirst are present, by drawing it the contrary way, so as to hinder it from drinking, and when hunger is present, by hindering it from eating; and in ten thousand other instances we see the soul opposing the desires of the body. Do we not?"

"Certainly."

"But have we not before allowed that if the soul were harmony, it would never utter a sound contrary to the tension, relaxation, vibration, or any other affection to which its component parts are subject, but would follow, and never govern them?"

"We did allow it," he replied, "for how could we do otherwise?"

"What, then, does not the soul now appear to act quite the contrary, ruling over all the parts, from which any one might say it subsists, and resisting almost all of them through the whole of life, and exercising dominion over them in all manner of ways, punishing some more severely even with pain, both by gymnastics and medicine, and others more mildly, partly threatening, and partly admonishing the desires, angers, and fears, as if, being itself of a different nature, it were conversing with something quite different? Just as

Homer has done in the *Odyssey*, where he speaks of Ulysses: 'Having struck his breast, he chid his heart in the following words, Bear up, my heart; ere this thou hast borne far worse.' Do you think that he composed this in the belief that the soul was harmony, and capable of being led by the passions of the body, and not rather that it was able to lead and govern them, as being something much more divine than to be compared with harmony?"

"By Jupiter, Socrates, it appears so to me."

95 "Therefore, my excellent friend, it is on no account correct for us to say that the soul is a kind of harmony; for as it appears, we should neither agree with Homer, that divine poet, nor with ourselves."

"Such is the case," he replied.

"Be it so, then," said Socrates, "we have already, as it seems, sufficiently appeased this Theban harmony. But how, Cebes, and by what arguments shall we appease this Cadmus?"

"You appear to me," replied Cebes, "to be likely to find out; for you have made out this argument against harmony wonderfully beyond my expectation. For when Simmias was saying what his doubts were, I wondered very much whether any one would be able to answer his reasoning. It therefore appeared to me unaccountable that he did not withstand the very first onset of your argument. I should not, therefore, be surprised if the arguments of Cadmus met with the same fate."

"My good friend," said Socrates, "do not speak so boastfully, lest some envious power should overthrow the argument that is about to be urged. These things, however, will be cared for by the deity, but let us, meeting hand to hand, in the manner of Homer, try whether you say any thing to the purpose. This, then, is the sum of what you inquire: you require it to be proved that our soul is imperishable and immortal; if a philosopher that is about to die, full of confidence and hope that after death he shall be far happier than if he had died after leading a different kind of life, shall not entertain this confidence foolishly and vainly. But to



show that the soul is something strong and divine, and that it existed before we men were born, you say not at all hinders, but that all these things may evince, not its immortality, but that the soul is durable, and existed an immense space of time before, and knew and did many things. But that, for all this, it was not at all the more immortal, but that its very entrance into the body of a man was the beginning of its destruction, as if it were a disease, so that it passes through this life in wretchedness, and at last perishes in that which is called death. But you say that it is of no consequence whether it comes into a body once or often, with respect to our occasion of fear: for it is right he should be afraid, unless he is foolish, who does not know, and cannot give a reason to prove, that the soul is immortal. Such, I think, Cebes, is the sum of what you say; and I purposely repeat it often, that nothing may escape us, and, if you please, you may add to or take from it."

Cebes replied, "I do not wish at present either to take from or add to it; that is what I mean."

Socrates, then, having paused for some time, and considered something within himself, said, "You inquire into no easy matter, Cebes; for it is absolutely necessary to discuss the whole question of generation and corruption. If you please, then, I will relate to you <sup>96</sup> what happened to me with reference to them; and afterwards, if any thing that I shall say shall appear to you useful, towards producing conviction on the subject you are now treating of, make use of it."

"I do indeed wish it," replied Cebes.

"Hear my relation then. When I was a young man, Cebes, I was wonderfully desirous of that wisdom which they call a history of nature: for it appeared to me to be a very sublime thing to know the causes of every thing, why each thing is generated, why it perishes, and why it exists. And I often tossed myself upwards and downwards, considering first such things as these, whether when heat and cold have undergone a certain corruption, as some say, then animals are formed; and whether the blood is that by means of which we think, or air, or fire, or none of these, but that it is the brain

that produces the perceptions of hearing, seeing, and smelling, and that from these come memory and opinion, and from memory and opinion, when in a state of rest, in the same way knowledge is produced? And again considering the corruptions of these, and the affections incidental to the heavens and the earth, I at length appeared to myself so unskilful in these speculations, that nothing could be more so. But I will give you a sufficient proof of this: for I then became, by these very speculations, so very blind with respect to things which I knew clearly before, as it appeared to myself and others, that I unlearnt even the things which I thought I knew before, both on many other subjects and also this, why a man grows. For before I thought this was evident to every one, that it proceeds from eating and drinking; for that, when, from the food, flesh is added to flesh, bone to bone, and so on in the same proportion, what is proper to them is added to the several other parts, then the bulk which was small becomes afterwards large, and thus that a little man becomes a big one. Such was my opinion at that time: does it appear to you correct?"

"To me it does," said Cebes.

"Consider this further. I thought that I had formed a right opinion, when on seeing a tall man standing by a short one, I judged that he was taller by the head, and in like manner one horse than another: and still more clearly than this, ten appeared to me to be more than eight, by two being added to them, and that two cubits are greater than one cubit, by exceeding it a half."

"But now," said Cebes, "what think you of these matters?"

"By Jupiter," said he, "I am far from thinking that I know the cause of these, for that I cannot even persuade myself of this, when a person has added one to one, whether the one to which the addition has been made has become two, or whether that which has been added, and that to which the addition has been made, 97 have become two by the addition of the one to the other. For I wonder, if when each of these was

separate from the other, each was one, and they were not yet two, but when they have approached nearer each other, this should be the cause of their becoming two, namely, the union by which they have been placed nearer one another. Nor yet, if any person should divide one, am I able to persuade myself that this, their division, is the cause of its becoming two. For this cause is the contrary to the former one of their becoming two; for then it was because they were brought nearer to each other, and the one was added to the other; but now it is, because one is removed and separated from the other. Nor do I yet persuade myself, that I know why one is one, nor, in a word, why any thing else is produced or perishes, or exists, according to this method of proceeding; but I mix up another method of my own at random, for this I can on no account give in to.

“But having once heard a person reading from a book, written, as he said, by Anaxagoras, and which said that it is intelligence that sets in order and is the cause of all things, I was delighted with this cause, and it appeared to me in a manner to be well that intelligence should be the cause of all things, and I considered with myself, if this is so, that the regulating intelligence orders all things, and disposes each in such way as will be best for it. If any one, then, should desire to discover the cause of every thing, in what way it is produced, or perishes, or exists, he must discover this respecting it, in what way it is best for it either to exist, or to suffer, or do anything else; from this mode of reasoning, then, it is proper that a man should consider nothing else, both with respect to himself and others, than what is most excellent and best: and it necessarily follows that this same person must also know that which is worst, for that the knowledge of both of them is the same. Thus reasoning with myself, I was delighted to think I had found in Anaxagoras a preceptor who would instruct me in the causes of things, agreeably to my own mind, and that he would inform me, first, whether the earth is flat or round, and when he had informed me, would moreover explain

the cause and necessity of its being so, arguing on the principle of the better, and showing that it is better, for it to be such as it is, and if he should say that it is in the middle, that he would moreover explain how it is better for it to be in the middle; and if he should make all this clear to me, I was prepared no longer to require any other species of cause. I was in like manner prepared to inquire respecting the sun, and moon, and the other stars, with respect to their velocities in reference to each other and their revolutions, and other conditions, in what way it is better for both to act and be affected as it does and is. For I never thought that after he had said that these things were set in order by intelligence, he would introduce any other cause for them than that it is best for them to be as they are: hence, I thought, that in assigning the cause to each of them, and to all in common, he would explain that which is best for each, and the common good of all. And I would not have given up my hopes for a good deal, but having taken up his books with great eagerness, I read through them as quickly as I could, that I might as soon as possible know the best, and the worst.

“From this wonderful hope, however, my friend, I was speedily thrown down, when, as I advance and read over his works, I meet with a man who makes no use of intelligence, nor assigns any causes for the ordering of all things, but makes the causes to consist of air, ether, and water, and many other things equally absurd. And he appeared to me to be very like one who should say, that whatever Socrates does he does by intelligence, and then, attempting to describe the causes of each particular action, should say, first of all, that for this reason I am now sitting here, because my body is composed of bones and sinews, and that the bones are hard, and have joints separate from each other, but that the sinews, being capable of tension and contraction, cover the bones, together with the flesh and skin which contains them. The bones, therefore, being suspended in their sockets, the nerves relaxing and tightening enable me to bend my limbs as I now do,

and from this cause I sit here bent up. And if again, he should assign other similar causes for my conversing with you, assigning as causes voice, and air, and hearing, and ten thousand other things of the kind, omitting to mention the real causes, that since it appeared better to the Athenians to condemn me, I therefore thought it better to sit here, and more just to remain and submit to the punishment which they have ordered; for, by the dog, I think these sinews and bones would have been long ago either in Megara or Bœotia, borne thither 99 by an opinion of that which is best, if I had not thought it more just and honourable to submit to whatever sentence the city might order, than to flee and run stealthily away. But to call such things causes is too absurd. But if any one should say that without possessing such things as bones and sinews, and whatever else I have, I could not do what I pleased, he would speak the truth; but to say that I do as I do through them, and that I act thus by intelligence, and not from the choice of what is best, would be a great and extreme disregard of reason. For this would be not to be able to distinguish that the real cause is one thing, and that another without which a cause could not be a cause: which indeed the generality of men appear to me to do, fumbling as it were in the dark, and making use of strange names, so as to denominate them as the very cause. Wherefore one encompassing the earth with a vortex from heaven, makes the earth remain fixed; but another, as if it were a broad trough, rests it upon the air as its base: but the power by which these things are now so disposed that they may be placed in the best manner possible, this they neither inquire into, nor do they think that it requires any superhuman strength; but they think they will some time or other find out an Atlas stronger and more immortal than this, and more capable of containing all things, and in reality, the good, and that which ought to hold them together and contain them, they take no account of at all. I then should most gladly have become the disciple of any one who would teach me of such a cause, in what way it is. But when I was disappointed of this, and

was neither able to discover it myself, nor to learn it from another, do you wish, Cebes, that I should show you in what way I set out upon a second voyage in search of the cause?"

"I wish it exceedingly," he replied.

"It appeared to me then," said he, "after this, when I was wearied with considering things that exist, that I ought to beware lest I should suffer in the same way as they do who look at and examine an eclipse of the sun, for some lose the sight of their eyes, unless they behold its image in water, or some similar medium. And I was affected with a similar feeling, and was afraid lest I should be utterly blinded in my soul through beholding things with the eyes, and endeavouring to grasp them by means of the several senses. It seemed to me, therefore, that I ought to have recourse to reasons, and to consider in them the truth of things. Perhaps, however, this similitude of mine may in some  
100 respect be incorrect; for I do not altogether admit that he who considers things in their reasons considers them in their images, more than he does who views them in their effects. However, I proceeded thus, and on each occasion laying down the reason, which I deem to be the strongest, whatever things appear to me to accord with this I regard as true, both with respect to the cause and every thing else, but such as do not accord I regard as not true. But I wish to explain my meaning to you in a clearer manner; for I think that you do not yet understand me."

"No, by Jupiter," said Cebes, "not well."

"However," continued he, "I am now saying nothing new, but what I have always at other times, and in a former part of this discussion, never ceased to say. I proceed then to attempt to explain to you that species of cause which I have busied myself about, and return again to those well-known subjects, and set out from them, laying down as an hypothesis, that there is a certain abstract beauty, and goodness, and magnitude, and so of all other things; which if you grant me, and allow that they do exist, I hope that I shall be able from these to explain the cause to you, and to discover that the soul is immortal."

"But," said Cebes, "since I grant you this, you may draw your conclusion at once."

"But consider," he said, "what follows from thence, and see if you can agree with me. For it appears to me, that if there be any thing else beautiful, besides beauty itself, it is not beautiful for any other reason than because it partakes of that abstract beauty; and I say the same of every thing. Do you admit such a cause?"

"I do admit it," he replied.

"I do not yet understand," he continued, "nor am I able to conceive, those other wise causes; but if any one should tell me why any thing is beautiful, either because it has a blooming florid colour, or figure, or any thing else of the kind, I dismiss all other reasons, for I am confounded by them all; but I simply, wholly, and perhaps foolishly, confine myself to this, that nothing else causes it to be beautiful, except either the presence or communication of that abstract beauty, by whatever means and in whatever way communicated: for I cannot yet affirm this with certainty, but only that by means of beauty all beautiful things become beautiful. For this appears to me the safest answer to give both to myself and others, and adhering to this, I think that I shall never fall, but that it is a safe answer both for me and any one else to give, that by means of beauty beautiful things become beautiful. Does it not also seem so to you?"

"It does."

"And that by magnitude great things become great, and greater things, greater; and by littleness less things become less?"

"Yes."

"You would not then approve of it, if any one said that one person is greater than another by the head, and that the less is less by the very same thing, but you would maintain that you mean nothing else than that every thing that is greater than another is greater by nothing else than magnitude, and that it is greater on this account, that is on account of magnitude, and that the less is less by nothing else than littleness, and on this account less, that is, on account of littleness, being

afraid, I think, lest some opposite argument should meet you if you should say that any one is greater and less by the head; as first, that the greater is greater, and the less less, by the very same thing; and next, that the greater is greater by the head, which is small; and that it is monstrous to suppose that any one is great through something small. Should you not be afraid of this?"

To which said Cebes, smilingly, "Indeed I should."

"Should you not, then," he continued, "be afraid to say that ten is more than eight by two, and for this cause exceeds it, and not by number, and on account of number? and that two cubits are greater than one cubit by half, and not by magnitude? for the fear is surely the same."

"Certainly," he replied.

"What then? when one has been added to one, would you not beware of saying that the addition is the cause of its being two, or division when it has been divided; and would you not loudly assert that you know no other way in which each thing subsists, than by partaking of the peculiar essence of each of which it partakes, and that in these cases you can assign no other cause of its becoming two than its partaking of duality; and that such things as are to become two must needs partake of this, and what is to become one, of unity; but these divisions and additions, and other such subtleties, you would dismiss, leaving them to be given as answers by persons wiser than yourself: whereas you, fearing, as it is said, your own shadow and inexperience, would adhere to this safe hypothesis, and answer accordingly? But if any one should assail this hypothesis of yours, would you not dismiss him and refrain from answering him till you had considered the consequences resulting from it, whether in your opinion they agree with or differ from each other? But when it should be necessary for you to give a reason for it, would you give one in a similar way, by again laying down another hypothesis, which should appear the best of higher principles, until you arrived at something satisfactory, but at the same time you would avoid



making confusion, as disputants do, in treating of the first principle and the results arising from it, if you really desire to arrive at the truth of things. For they, perhaps, make no account at all of this, nor pay any attention to it, for they are able, through their wisdom, to mingle all things together, and at the same time please themselves. But you, if you are a philosopher, 102 would act, I think, as I now describe."

"You speak most truly," said Simmias and Cebes together.

*Ech.* By Jupiter, Phædo, they said so with good reason: for he appears to me to have explained these things with wonderful clearness, even to one endued with a small degree of intelligence.

*Phæd.* Certainly, Echecrates, and so it appeared to all who were present.

*Ech.* And so it appears to me, who was absent, and now hear it related. But what was said after this?

*Phæd.* As well as I remember, when these things had been granted him, and it was allowed that each several idea exists of itself, and that other things partaking of them receive their denomination from them, he next asked: "If then," he said, "you admit that these things are so, whether, when you say that Simmias is greater than Socrates, but less than Phædo, do you not then say that magnitude and littleness are both in Simmias?"

"I do."

"And yet," he said, "you must confess that Simmias's exceeding Socrates is not actually true in the manner in which the words express it; for Simmias does not naturally exceed Socrates, in that he is Simmias, but in consequence of the magnitude which he happens to have; nor, again, does he exceed Socrates, because Socrates is Socrates, but because Socrates possesses littleness in comparison with his magnitude?"

"True."

"Nor, again, is Simmias exceeded by Phædo, because Phædo is Phædo, but because Phædo possesses magnitude in comparison with Simmias's littleness?"

"It is so."

"Thus, then, Simmias has the appellation of being both little and great, being between both, by exceeding the littleness of one through his own magnitude, and to the other yielding a magnitude that exceeds his own littleness." And at the same time, smiling, he said, "I seem to speak with the precision of a short-hand writer; however, it is as I say."

He allowed it.

"But I say it for this reason, wishing you to be of the same opinion as myself. For it appears to me, not only that magnitude itself is never disposed to be at the same time great and little, but that magnitude in us never admits the little, nor is disposed to be exceeded, but one of two things, either to flee and withdraw when its contrary, the little, approaches it, or when it has actually come, to perish; but that it is not disposed, by sustaining and receiving littleness, to be different from what it was. Just as I, having received and sustained littleness, and still continuing the same person that I am, am this same little person: but that, while it is great, never endures to be little. And in like manner the little that is in us is not disposed at any time to become or to be great, nor is any thing else among contraries, while it continues what it was, at  
103 the same time disposed to become and to be its contrary; but in this contingency it either departs or perishes."

"It appears so to me," said Cebes, "in every respect."

But some one of those present, on hearing this, I do not clearly remember who he was, said, "By the gods, was not the very contrary of what is now asserted admitted in the former part of our discussion, that the greater is produced from the less, and the less from the greater, and in a word, that the very production of contraries is from contraries? But now it appears to me to be asserted that this can never be the case."

Upon this Socrates, having leant his head forward and listened, said, "You have reminded me in a manly way; you do not, however, perceive the difference between what is now and what was then asserted. For

then it was said, that a contrary thing is produced from a contrary; but now, that a contrary can never become contrary to itself, neither that which is in us, nor that which is in nature. For then, my friend, we spoke of things that have contraries, calling them by the appellation of those things; but now we are speaking of those very things, from the presence of which things so called receive their appellation, and of these very things we say that they are never disposed to admit of production from each other." And, at the same time looking at Cebes, "Has any thing that has been said, Cebes, disturbed you?"

"Indeed," said Cebes, "I am not at all so disposed; however, I by no means say that there are not many things that disturb me."

"Then," he continued, "we have quite agreed to this, that a contrary can never be contrary to itself."

"Most certainly," he replied.

"But further," he said, "consider whether you will agree with me in this also. Do you call heat and cold anything?"

"I do."

"The same as snow and fire?"

"By Jupiter, I do not."

"But heat is something different from fire, and cold something different from snow?"

"Yes."

"But this, I think, is apparent to you, that snow, while it is snow, can never, when it has admitted heat, as we said before, continue to be what it was, snow and hot, but, on the approach of heat, it must either withdraw or perish?"

"Certainly."

"And again, that fire, when cold approaches it, must either depart or perish; but that it will never endure, when it has admitted coldness, to continue what it was, fire and cold?"

"You speak truly," he said.

"It happens then," he continued, "with respect to some of such things, that not only is the idea itself always thought worthy of the same appellation, but

likewise something else which is not indeed that idea itself but constantly retains its form so long as it exists. What I mean will perhaps be clearer in the following examples. The odd in number must always possess the name by which we now call it; must it not?"

"Certainly."

104 "Must it alone of all things, for this I ask, or is there any thing else, which is not the same as the odd, but yet which we must always call odd, together with its own name, because it is so constituted by nature, that it can never be without the odd? But this I say is the case with the number three, and many others. For consider with respect to the number three; does it not appear to you that it must always be called by its own name, as well as by that of the odd, which is not the same as the number three? Yet such is the nature of the number three, five, and the entire half of number, that though they are not the same as the odd, yet each of them is always odd. And again, two and four, and the whole other series of number, though not the same as the even, are nevertheless each of them always even: do you admit this or not?"

"How should I not?" he replied.

"Observe then," said he, "what I wish to prove. It is this, that it appears, not only that these contraries do not admit each other, but that even such things as are not contrary to each other, and yet always possess contraries, do not appear to admit that idea which is contrary to the idea that exists in themselves, but, when it approaches, perish or depart. Shall we not allow that the number three would first perish, and suffer any thing whatever, rather than endure, while it is still three, to become even?"

"Most certainly," said Cebes.

"And yet," said he, "the number two is not contrary to three."

"Surely not."

"Not only, then, do ideas that are contrary never allow the approach of each other, but some other things also do not allow the approach of contraries."

"You say very truly," he replied.

"Do you wish, then," he said, "that, if we are able, we should define what these things are?"

"Certainly."

"Would they not then, Cebes," he said, "be such things as whatever they occupy, compel that thing not only to retain its own idea, but also that of something which is always a contrary?"

"How do you mean?"

"As we just now said. For you know surely, that whatever things the idea of three occupies must of necessity not only be three, but also odd?"

"Certainly."

"To such a thing, then, we assert, that the idea contrary to that form which constitutes this can never come."

"It cannot."

"But did the odd make it so?"

"Yes."

"And is the contrary to this the idea of the even?"

"Yes."

"The idea of the even, then, will never come to the three?"

"No surely."

"Three, then, has no part in the even?"

"None whatever."

"The number three is uneven?"

"Yes."

"What therefore I said should be defined, namely, what things they are which, though not contrary to some particular thing, yet do not admit of the contrary itself, as in the present instance, the number three though not contrary to the even, does not any the more admit it, for it always brings the contrary with it, just as the number two does to the odd, fire to cold, and many other particulars; consider then, whether you would thus define, not only that a contrary does not admit a contrary, but also that that which brings with it a contrary to that to which it approaches, will never admit the contrary of that which it brings with it. But call it to mind again, for it will not be useless to hear it often repeated. Five will not admit the idea of the

even, nor ten, its double, that of the odd. This double then, though it is itself contrary to something else, yet will not admit the idea of the odd; nor will half as much again, nor other things of the kind, such as the half and the third part admit the idea of the whole, if you follow me and agree with me that it is so."

"I entirely agree with you," he said, "and follow you."

"Tell me again, then," he said, "from the beginning; and do not answer me in the terms in which I put the question, but in different ones, imitating my example. For I say this because, besides that safe mode of answering, which I mentioned at first, from what has now been said, I see another no less safe one. For if you should ask me what that is, which if it be in the body will cause it to be hot, I should not give you that safe but unlearned answer, that it is heat, but one more elegant, from what we have just now said, that it is fire: nor, if you should ask me what that is, which if it be in the body, will cause it to be diseased, should I say that it is disease, but fever; nor, if you should ask what that is, which if it be in number, will cause it to be odd, should I say that it is unevenness, but unity, and so with other things. But consider whether you sufficiently understand what I mean."

"Perfectly so," he replied.

"Answer me then," he said, "what that is, which when it is in the body, the body will be alive?"

"Soul," he replied.

"Is not this, then, always the case?"

"How should it not be?" said he.

"Does the soul, then, always bring life to whatever it occupies?"

"It does indeed," he replied.

"Whether, then, is there any thing contrary to life or not?"

"There is," he replied.

"What?"

"Death."

"The soul, then, will never admit the contrary of

that which it brings with it, as has been already allowed? "

"Most assuredly," replied Cebes.

"What then? how do we denominate that which does not admit the idea of the even? "

"Uneven," he replied.

"And that which does not admit the just, nor the musical? "

"Unmusical," he said, "and unjust."

"Be it so. But what do we call that which does not admit death? "

"Immortal," he replied.

"Therefore does not the soul admit death? "

"No."

"Is the soul, then, immortal? "

"Immortal."

"Be it so," he said. "Shall we say then, that this has been now demonstrated? or how think you? "

"Most completely, Socrates."

"What then," said he, "Cebes, if it were necessary for the uneven to be imperishable, would the number 106 three be otherwise than imperishable? "

"How should it not? "

"If, therefore, it were also necessary that what is without heat should be imperishable, when any one should introduce heat to snow, would not the snow withdraw itself, safe and unmelted? For it would not perish; nor yet would it stay and admit the heat."

"You say truly," he replied.

"In like manner, I think, if that which is insusceptible of cold were imperishable, that when any thing cold approached the fire, it would neither be extinguished nor perish, but would depart quite safe."

"Of necessity," he said.

"Must we not then of necessity," he continued, "speak thus of that which is immortal? if that which is immortal is imperishable, it is impossible for the soul to perish, when death approaches it. For, from what has been said already, it will not admit death, nor will ever be dead, just as we said that three will never be even, nor again will the odd, nor will fire be cold, nor

yet the heat that is in fire. But some one may say, what hinders, though the odd can never become even by the approach of the even, as we have allowed, yet, when the odd is destroyed, that the even should succeed in its place? We could not contend with him who should make this objection, that it is not destroyed; for the uneven is not imperishable; since, if this were granted us, we might easily have contended, that on the approach of the even the odd and the three depart; and we might have contended in the same way with respect to fire, heat, and the rest; might we not?"

"Certainly."

"Wherefore, with respect to the immortal, if we have allowed that it is imperishable, the soul, in addition to its being immortal, must also be imperishable; if not, there will be need of other arguments."

"But there is no need," he said, "as far as that is concerned; for scarcely could any thing not admit of corruption, if that which is immortal and eternal is liable to it."

"The deity, indeed, I think," said Socrates, "and the idea itself of life, and if any thing else is immortal, must be allowed by all beings to be incapable of dissolution."

"By Jupiter," he replied, "by all men indeed, and still more, as I think, by the gods."

"Since, then, that which is immortal is also incorruptible, can the soul, since it is immortal, be any thing else than imperishable?"

"It must of necessity be so."

"When, therefore, death approaches a man, the mortal part of him, as it appears, dies, but the immortal part departs safe and uncorrupted, having withdrawn itself from death?"

"It appears so."

"The soul, therefore," he said, "Cebes, is most certainly immortal and imperishable, and our souls will really exist in Hades."

"Therefore, Socrates," he said, "I have nothing further to say against this, nor any reason for doubting your arguments. But if Simmias here or any one



else has any thing to say, it were well for him not to be silent: for I know not to what other opportunity beyond the present any one can defer it, who wishes either to speak or hear about these things."

"But indeed," said Simmias, "neither have I any reason to doubt what has been urged; yet from the magnitude of the subject discussed, and from my low opinion of human weakness, I am compelled still to retain a doubt within myself with respect to what has been said."

"Not only so, Simmias," said Socrates, "but you say this well, and moreover the first hypotheses, even though they are credible to you, should nevertheless be examined more carefully; and if you should investigate them sufficiently, I think you will follow my reasoning as far as it is possible for man to do so; and if this very point becomes clear, you will inquire no further."

"You speak truly," he said.

"But it is right, my friends," he said, "that we should consider this, that if the soul is immortal, it requires our care not only for the present time, which we call life, but for all time; and the danger would now appear to be dreadful, if one should neglect it. For if death were a deliverance from every thing, it would be a great gain for the wicked, when they die, to be delivered at the same time from the body, and from their vices together with the soul: but now, since it appears to be immortal, it can have no other refuge from evils, nor safety, except by becoming as good and wise as possible. For the soul goes to Hades, possessing nothing else but its discipline and education, which are said to be of the greatest advantage or detriment to the dead, on the very beginning of his journey thither. For thus it is said; that each person's demon who was assigned to him while living, when he dies conducts him to some place, where they that are assembled together must receive sentence and then proceed to Hades with that guide, who has been ordered to conduct them from hence thither. But there having received their deserts, and having remained the appointed time, another guide

brings them back hither again, after many and long revolution of time. The journey, then, is not such as  
108 the *Telephus* of Æschylus describes it. For he says that a simple path leads to Hades; but it appears to me to be neither simple nor one: for there would be no need of guides, nor could any one ever miss the way, if there were but one. But now it appears to have many divisions and windings; and this I conjecture from our religious and funeral rites. The well-ordered and wise soul, then, both follows, and is not ignorant of its present condition; but that which through passion clings to the body, as I said before, having longingly fluttered about it for a long time, and about its visible place, after vehement resistance and great suffering, is forcibly and with great difficulty led away by its appointed demon. And when it arrives at the place where the others are, impure and having done any such thing as the committal of unrighteous murders or other similar actions, which are kindred to these, and are the deeds of kindred souls, every one shuns it and turns away from it, and will neither be its fellow-traveller or guide, but it wanders about, oppressed with every kind of helplessness until certain periods have elapsed: and when these are completed, it is carried of necessity to an abode suitable to it; but the soul which has passed through life with purity and moderation, having obtained the gods for its fellow-travellers and guides, settles each in the place suited to it. There are indeed many and wonderful places in the earth, and it is itself neither of such a kind, nor of such a magnitude, as is supposed by those who are accustomed to speak of the earth, as I have been persuaded by a certain person."

Whereupon Simmias said, "How mean you, Socrates? For I too have heard many things about the earth, not however those things which have obtained your belief: I would therefore gladly hear them."

"Indeed, Simmias, the art of Glaucus does not seem to me to be required to relate what these things are; that they are true however, appears to me more than the art of Glaucus can prove, and besides, I should probably not be able to do it, and even if I did know

how, what remains to me of life, Simmias, seems insufficient for the length of the subject. However, the form of the earth, such as I am persuaded it is, and the different places in it, nothing hinders me from telling."

"But that will be enough," said Simmias.

"I am persuaded, then," said he, "in the first place, that, if the earth is in the middle of the heavens, and is of a spherical form, it has no need of air, nor of any 109 other similar force, to prevent it from falling, but that the similarity of the heavens to themselves on every side, and the equilibrium of the earth itself, are sufficient to support it; for a thing in a state of equilibrium when placed in the middle of something that presses it equally on all sides cannot incline more or less on any side, but being equally affected all around remains unmoved. In the first place then," he said, "I am persuaded of this."

"And very properly so," said Simmias.

"Yet further," said he, "that it is very large, and that we who inhabit some small portion of it, from the river Phasis to the pillars of Hercules, dwell about the sea, like ants or frogs about a marsh, and that many others elsewhere dwell in many similar places, for that there are every where about the earth many hollows of various forms and sizes into which there is a confluence of water, mist, and air; but that the earth itself, being pure, is situated in the pure heavens, in which are the stars, and which most persons who are accustomed to speak about such things call ether; of which these things are the sediment and are continually flowing into the hollow parts of the earth. That we are ignorant, then, that we are dwelling in its hollows, and imagine that we inhabit the upper parts of the earth, just as if any one dwelling in the bottom of the sea, should think that he dwelt on the sea, and, beholding the sun and the other stars through the water, should imagine that the sea was the heavens, but through sloth and weakness should never have reached the surface of the sea, nor, having emerged and risen up from the sea to this region, have seen how much more pure and more beautiful it is than the place where he is, nor has heard of it from

any one else who has seen it. This then is the very condition in which we are; for, dwelling in some hollow of the earth, we think that we dwell on the surface of it, and call the air heaven, as if the stars moved through this, being heaven itself. But this is because by reason of our weakness and sloth, we are unable to reach to the summit of the air. Since, if any one could arrive at its summit, or, becoming winged, could fly up thither, or emerging from hence, he would see,—just as with us, fishes emerging from the sea, behold what is here,—so any one would behold the things there, and if his nature were able to endure the contemplation, he would know that that is the true heaven, and the true light, and the true earth. For this earth and these stones, and the whole region here, are decayed and corroded, as things in the sea by the saltness; for nothing of any value grows in the sea, nor, in a word, does it contain any thing perfect, but there are caverns and sand, and mud in abundance, and filth, in whatever parts of the sea there is earth, nor are they at all worthy to be compared with the beautiful things with us. But on the other hand, those things in the upper regions of the earth would appear far more to excel the things with us. For, if we may tell a beautiful fable, it is well worth hearing, Simmias, what kind the things are on the earth beneath the heavens."

"Indeed, Socrates," said Simmias, "we should be very glad to hear that fable."

"First of all then, my friend," he continued, "this earth, if any one should survey it from above, is said to have the appearance of balls covered with twelve different pieces of leather, variegated and distinguished with colours, of which the colours found here, and which painters use, are as it were copies. But there the whole earth is composed of such, and far more brilliant and pure than these; for one part of it is purple, and of wonderful beauty, part of a golden colour, and part of white, more white than chalk or snow, and in like manner composed of other colours, and those more in number and more beautiful than any we have ever beheld. And those very hollow parts of the earth, though

filled with water and air, exhibit a certain species of colour, shining among the variety of other colours, so that one continually variegated aspect presents itself to the view. In this earth, being such, all things that grow, grow in a manner proportioned to its nature, trees, flowers, and fruits; and again, in like manner, its mountains and stones possess, in the same proportion, smoothness and transparency, and more beautiful colours; of which the well-known stones here that are so highly prized are but fragments, such as sardines, jaspers, and emeralds, and all of that kind. But there, there is nothing subsists that is not of this character, and even more beautiful than these. But the reason of this is, because the stones there are pure, and not eaten up and decayed, like those here, by rottenness and saltiness, which flow down hither together, and which produce deformity and disease in the stones and the earth, and in other things, even animals and plants. But that earth is adorned with all these, and moreover with gold and silver, and other things of the kind: for III they are naturally conspicuous, being numerous and large, and in all parts of the earth; so that to behold it is a sight for the blessed. There are also many other animals and men upon it, some dwelling in mid-earth, others about the air, as we do about the sea, and others in islands which the air flows round, and which are near the continent: and in one word, what water and the sea are to us, for our necessities, the air is to them; and what air is to us, that ether is to them. But their seasons are of such a temperament that they are free from disease, and live for a much longer time than those here, and surpass us in sight, hearing, and smelling, and every thing of this kind, as much as air excels water, and ether air, in purity. Moreover, they have abodes and temples of the gods, in which gods really dwell, and voices and oracles, and sensible visions of the gods, and such-like intercourse with them; the sun too, and moon, and stars, are seen by them such as they really are, and their felicity in other respects is correspondent with these things.

“And such indeed is the nature of the whole earth,

and the parts about the earth ; but there are many places all round it throughout its cavities, some deeper and more open than that in which we dwell : but others that are deeper, have a less chasm than our region, and others are shallower in depth than it is here and broader. But all these are in many places perforated one into another under the earth, some with narrower and some with wider channels, and have passages through, by which a great quantity of water flows from one into another, as into basins, and there are immense bulks of ever-flowing rivers under the earth, both of hot and cold water, and a great quantity of fire, and mighty rivers of fire, and many of liquid mire, some purer, and some more miry, as in Sicily there are rivers of mud that flow before the lava, and the lava itself, and from these the several places are filled, according as the overflow from time to time happens to come to each of them. But all these move up and down as it were by a certain oscillation existing in the earth. And this oscillation proceeds from such natural cause as

112 this : one of the chasms of the earth is exceedingly large, and perforated through the entire earth, and is that which Homer speaks of, 'very far off, where is the most profound abyss beneath the earth,' which elsewhere both he and many other poets have called Tartarus. For into this chasm all rivers flow together, and from it flow out again : but they severally derive their character from the earth through which they flow. And the reason why all streams flow out from thence, and flow into it, is because this liquid has neither bottom nor base. Therefore it oscillates and fluctuates up and down, and the air and the wind around it do the same ; for they accompany it both when it rushes to those parts of the earth, and when to these. And as in respiration the flowing breath is continually breathed out, and drawn in, so there the wind oscillating with the liquid, causes certain vehement and irresistible winds both as it enters and goes out. When, therefore, the water rushing in descends to the place which we call the lower region, it flows through the earth into the streams there and fills them, just as men pump up water. But when

again it leaves those regions and rushes hither, it again fills the rivers here, and these, when filled, flow through channels and through the earth, and having severally reached the several places to which they are journeying, they make seas, lakes, rivers, and fountains. Then sinking again from thence beneath the earth, some of them having gone round longer and more numerous places, and others round fewer and shorter, they again discharge themselves into Tartarus, some much lower than they were drawn up, others only a little so, but all of them flow in again beneath the point at which they flowed out. And some issue out directly opposite the place by which they flow in, others on the same side: there are also some which having gone round altogether in a circle, folding themselves once or several times round the earth, like serpents, when they had descended as low as possible, discharge themselves again: and it is possible for them to descend on either side as far as the middle, but not beyond; for in each direction there is an acclivity to the streams both ways.

"Now there are many other large and various streams, and among this great number there are four certain streams, of which the largest, and that which flows most outwardly round the earth, is called Ocean, but directly opposite this, and flowing in a contrary direction, is Acheron, which flows through other desert places, and moreover passing under the earth, reaches <sup>113</sup> the Acherusian lake, where the souls of most who die arrive, and having remained there for certain destined periods, some longer and some shorter, are again sent forth into the generations of animals. A third river issues midway between these, and near its source falls into a vast region, burning with abundance of fire, and forms a lake larger than our sea, boiling with water and mud: from hence it proceeds in a circle, turbulent and muddy, and folding itself round it reaches both other places and the extremity of the Acherusian lake, but does not mingle with its water; but folding itself oftentimes beneath the earth, it discharges itself into the lower parts of Tartarus. And this is the river which they call Pyriphlegethon, whose burning streams

emit dissevered fragments in whatever part of the earth they happen to be. Opposite to this again the fourth river first falls into a place dreadful and savage, as it is said, having its whole colour like cyanus: this they call Stygian, and the lake, which the river forms by its discharge, Styx. This river having fallen in here, and received awful power in the water, sinking beneath the earth, proceeds, folding itself round, in an opposite course to Pyriphlegethon, and meets it in the Acherusian lake from a contrary direction. Neither does the water of this river mingle with any other, but it too, having gone round in a circle, discharges itself into Tartarus, opposite to Pyriphlegethon. Its name, as the poets say, is Cocytus.

"These things being thus constituted, when the dead arrive at the place to which their demon leads them severally, first of all they are judged, as well those who have lived well and piously, as those who have not. And those who appear to have passed a middle kind of life, proceeding to Acheron, and embarking in the vessels they have, on these arrive at the lake, and there dwell, and when they are purified, and have suffered punishment for the iniquities they may have committed, they are set free, and each receives the reward of his good deeds, according to his deserts: but those who appear to be incurable, through the magnitude of their offences, either from having committed many and great sacrileges, or many unjust and lawless murders, or other similar crimes, these a suitable destiny hurls into Tartarus, whence they never come forth. But those who appear to have been guilty of curable, yet great offences, such as those who through anger have committed any violence against father or mother, and have  
 114 lived the remainder of their life in a state of penitence, or they who have become homicides in a similar manner, these must of necessity fall into Tartarus, but after they have fallen, and have been there for a year, the wave casts them forth, the homicides into Cocytus, but the parricides and matricides into Pyriphlegethon: but when, being borne along, they arrive at the Acherusian lake, there they cry out to and invoke, some those whom



they slew, others those whom they injured, and invoking them, they entreat and implore them to suffer them to go out into the lake, and to receive them, and if they persuade them, they go out, and are freed from their sufferings, but if not, they are borne back to Tartarus, and thence again to the rivers, and they do not cease from suffering this until they have persuaded those whom they have injured, for this sentence was imposed on them by the judges. But those who are found to have lived an eminently holy life, these are they, who, being freed and set at large from these regions in the earth, as from a prison, arrive at the pure abode above, and dwell on the upper parts of the earth. And among these, they who have sufficiently purified themselves by philosophy shall live without bodies, throughout all future time, and shall arrive at habitations yet more beautiful than these, which it is neither easy to describe, nor at present is there sufficient time for the purpose.

"But for the sake of these things which we have described, we should use every endeavour, Simmias, so as to acquire virtue and wisdom in this life; for the reward is noble, and the hope great.

"To affirm positively, indeed, that these things are exactly as I have described them, does not become a man of sense; that however either this, or something of the kind, takes place with respect to our souls and their habitations—since our soul is certainly immortal—this appears to me most fitting to be believed, and worthy the hazard for one who trusts in its reality; for the hazard is noble, and it is right to allure ourselves with such things, as with enchantments; for which reason I have prolonged my story to such a length. On account of these things, then, a man ought to be confident about his soul, who during this life has disregarded all the pleasures and ornaments of the body as foreign from his nature, and who, having thought that they do more harm than good, has zealously applied himself to the acquirement of knowledge, and who having adorned his soul not with a foreign but its own proper ornament, temperance, justice, fortitude, freedom, and truth, thus waits for his passage to Hades,

as one who is ready to depart whenever destiny shall summon him. You then," he continued, "Simmias and Cebes, and the rest, will each of you depart at some future time; but now destiny summons me, as a tragic writer would say, and it is nearly time for me to betake myself to the bath; for it appears to me to be better to drink the poison after I have bathed myself, and not to trouble the women with washing my dead body."

When he had thus spoken, Crito said, "So be it, Socrates, but what commands have you to give to these or to me, either respecting your children, or any other matter, in attending to which we can most oblige you?"

"What I always say, Crito," he replied, "nothing new; that by taking care of yourselves you will oblige both me and mine, and yourselves, whatever you do, though you should not now promise it; but if you neglect yourselves, and will not live as it were in the footsteps of what has been now and formerly said, even though you should promise much at present, and that earnestly, you will do no good at all."

"We will endeavour then so to do," he said; "but how shall we bury you?"

"Just as you please," he said, "if only you can catch me, and I do not escape from you." And at the same time smiling gently, and looking round on us, he said; "I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that I am that Socrates who is now conversing with you, and who methodizes each part of the discourse; but he thinks that I am he whom he will shortly behold dead, and asks how he should bury me. But that which I some time since argued at length, that when I have drunk the poison I shall no longer remain with you, but shall depart to some happy state of the blessed, this I seem to have urged to him in vain, though I meant at the same time to console both you and myself. Be ye then my sureties to Crito," he said, "in an obligation contrary to that which he made to the judges; for he undertook that I should remain; but do you be sureties that, when I die, I shall not remain, but shall depart, that Crito may more easily bear it, and when he sees my body either burnt or buried, may not be afflicted for

me, as if I suffered some dreadful thing, nor say at my interment that Socrates is laid out, or is carried out, or is buried. For be well assured," he said, "most excellent Crito, that to speak improperly is not only culpable as to the thing itself, but likewise occasions some injury to our souls. You must have a good courage then, and say that you bury my body, and bury it in such a manner 116 as is pleasing to you, and as you think is most agreeable to our laws."

When he had said thus he rose, and went into a chamber to bathe, and Crito followed him, but he directed us to wait for him. We waited, therefore, conversing among ourselves about what had been said, and considering it again, and sometimes speaking about our calamity, how severe it would be to us, sincerely thinking that, like those who are deprived of a father, we should pass the rest of our life as orphans. When he had bathed, and his children were brought to him, for he had two little sons and one grown up, and the women belonging to his family were come, having conversed with them in the presence of Crito, and given them such injunctions as he wished, he directed the women and children to go away, and then returned to us. And it was now near sun-set; for he spent a considerable time within. But when he came from bathing he sat down, and did not speak much afterwards; then the officer of the Eleven came in, and standing near him, said, "Socrates, I shall not have to find that fault with you that I do with others, that they are angry with me, and curse me, when, by order of the archons, I bid them drink the poison. But you, on all other occasions during the time you have been here, I have found to be the most noble, meek, and excellent man of all that ever came into this place: and, therefore, I am now well convinced that you will not be angry with me, for you know who are to blame, but with them. Now, then, for you know what I came to announce to you, farewell, and endeavour to bear what is inevitable as easily as possible." And at the same time, bursting into tears, he turned away and withdrew.

And Socrates, looking after him, said, "And thou,

too, farewell, we will do as you direct." At the same time turning to us, he said, "How courteous the man is; during the whole time I have been here he has visited me, and conversed with me sometimes, and proved the worthiest of men; and now how generously he weeps for me. But come, Crito, let us obey him, and let some one bring the poison, if it is ready pounded, but if not, let the man pound it."

Then Crito said, "But I think, Socrates, that the sun is still on the mountains, and has not yet set. Besides, I know that others have drunk the poison very late, after it had been announced to them, and have supped and drunk freely, and some even have enjoyed the objects of their love. Do not hasten then, for there is yet time."

Upon this Socrates replied, "These men whom you mention, Crito, do these things with good reason, for they think they shall gain by so doing, and I too with good reason shall not do so; for I think I shall gain nothing by drinking a little later, except to become  
17 ridiculous to myself, in being so fond of life, and sparing of it when none any longer remains. Go then," he said, "obey, and do not resist."

Crito having heard this, nodded to the boy that stood near. And the boy having gone out, and staid for some time, came, bringing with him the man that was to administer the poison, who brought it ready pounded in a cup. And Socrates, on seeing the man, said, "Well, my good friend, as you are skilled in these matters, what must I do?"

"Nothing else," he replied, "than when you have drunk it walk about, until there is a heaviness in your legs, then lie down; thus it will do its purpose." And at the same time he held out the cup to Socrates. And he having received it very cheerfully, Echecrates, neither trembling, nor changing at all in colour or countenance, but, as he was wont, looking steadfastly at the man, said, "What say you of this potion, with respect to making a libation to any one, is it lawful or not?"

"We only pound so much, Socrates," he said, "as we think sufficient to drink."

"I understand you," he said, "but it is certainly both lawful and right to pray to the gods, that my departure hence thither may be happy; which therefore I pray, and so may it be." And as he said this he drank it off readily and calmly. Thus far, most of us were with difficulty able to restrain ourselves from weeping, but when we saw him drinking, and having finished the draught, we could do so no longer; but in spite of myself the tears came in full torrent, so that, covering my face, I wept for myself, for I did not weep for him, but for my own fortune, in being deprived of such a friend. But Crito, even before me, when he could not restrain his tears, had risen up. But Apollodorus even before this had not ceased weeping, and then bursting into an agony of grief, weeping and lamenting, he pierced the heart of every one present, except Socrates himself. But he said, "What are you doing, my admirable friends? I indeed, for this reason chiefly, sent away the women, that they might not commit any folly of this kind. For I have heard that it is right to die with good omens. Be quiet, therefore, and bear up."

When we heard this we were ashamed, and restrained our tears. But he, having walked about, when he said that his legs were growing heavy, laid down on his back; for the man so directed him. And at the same time he who gave him the poison, taking hold of him, after a short interval examined his feet and legs; and then having pressed his foot hard, he asked if he felt it: 118 he said that he did not. And after this he pressed his thighs; and thus going higher, he showed us that he was growing cold and stiff. Then Socrates touched himself, and said, that when the poison reached his heart he should then depart. But now the parts around the lower belly were almost cold; when uncovering himself, for he had been covered over, he said, and they were his last words, "Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius; pay it, therefore, and do not neglect it."

"It shall be done," said Crito, "but consider whether you have any thing else to say."

To this question he gave no reply; but shortly after

he gave a convulsive movement, and the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed; and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes.

This, Echecrates, was the end of our friend, a man, as we may say, the best of all of his time that we have known, and moreover, the most wise and just.

## PHÆDRUS

*Socrates—Phædrus*

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III.  
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*Socrates.* WHENCE come you, friend Phædrus, and whitner are you bound?

*Phæd.* I come from Lysias, the son of Cephalus; and I am going for a walk outside the walls, as I have been sitting with him a long time, in fact ever since daybreak. And it is by the advice, Socrates, of our common friend Acumenus, that I take my walks in the open roads; for he tells me they are more refreshing than the covered promenades.

*Socrates.* And he's right there, my good friend. So Lysias, it appears, was in the city.

*Phæd.* Yes, staying with Epicrates at the Morychian yonder, close by the Olympian.

*Socrates.* Well, how did you pass your time there?, though I can hardly doubt that Lysias regaled you with his speeches.

*Phæd.* You shall hear, if you are not too much engaged to join me in my walk.

*Socrates.* Engaged, indeed? don't you believe that in the words of Pindar I would count it "a matter far above all engagement" to hear what passed between you and Lysias?

*Phæd.* Come on then.

*Socrates.* If you will begin your tale.

*Phæd.* I will; and I can assure you, Socrates, you will find it very much in your way. For the speech which engaged our attention was in a certain fashion of an amatory character; that is to say, Lysias introduced one of our beautiful boys as being courted, though not by a lover; in fact, this is the very point on which he has displayed his ingenuity, as he maintains that favour ought to be shown to one who is not in love, rather than to one who is.

*Socrates.* What a generous man! I wish he would maintain that poverty has a better claim than wealth, and age than youth; and in short, that the preference ought to be given to all the other properties that belong to myself in common with the bulk of mankind. In that case his speeches would be really delightful, and of public utility. But whether he does so or not, I have conceived such a desire to hear what he says, that even if you extend your walk to Megara, and, as Herodicus prescribes, go close up to the wall and then turn back again, you will not shake me off, I can promise you.

*Phæd.* What are you talking about, my good friend  
228 *Socrates?* It took Lysias, the cleverest writer of the day, a long while to compose this speech at his leisure; and do you imagine that a novice like myself could repeat it from memory without doing injustice to the author? No, that I am very sure I could not; and yet I would sooner be able to do so than come into the possession of a large sum of money.

*Socrates.* My good friend Phædrus, if I do not know Phædrus, I do not know myself any longer. But neither the one nor the other is the case; I do know Phædrus; I know full well that on hearing Lysias read the speech, he was not content with hearing it once only, but kept urging him to repeat it again and again; and Lysias was quite as eager to comply. Phædrus however was not satisfied even with this, but at last took the book from the other's hands, and looked over again the parts he especially fancied. And being wearied with sitting all the morning thus engaged, he set out for a walk, though not, I fully believe, till he had learnt the entire speech by heart, unless it was a very long one. And he was going outside the walls to con it over by himself. But on his way he met with a man who is afflicted with a weakness for listening to speeches, and when he saw him he was charmed (oh so charmed) at the sight, for says he, "I shall now have a friend to share in my raptures." So he requested his friend to join him in his walk. When, however, this lover of speeches asked him to commence, he began to be coy, as though disinclined, albeit determined I am



sure, if he could get no willing hearer, to speak out at last even to unwilling ears. Do you therefore, Phædrus, request him to do at once what at all events he is sure to do presently.

*Phæd.* My wisest plan, there seems little doubt, is to repeat the speech as well as I am able; for I believe you have made up your mind on no account to let me go, till I have given it you in some way or other.

*Socrates.* You have defined my intentions to a nicety.

*Phæd.* Well then, I'll do my best, though really, Socrates, I can assure you that I have not learnt the words by heart; but if you are content with a general view of the points of difference, as Lysias laid them down, between the claims of the impassioned and unimpassioned suitor, I am ready to go through them in order under their several heads, beginning where he began.

*Socrates.* Thank you, my obliging friend; not till you have shown me though, what it is you have got there in your left hand beneath your cloak, as I have a shrewd suspicion that it is the speech itself. If so, I must beg you to understand that, fond as I am of you, I have yet no intention at all of lending myself for you to practise upon, while Lysias is also present. So let us see what you have got.

*Phæd.* Enough, Socrates, I confess; you have dashed down the hope I entertained of practising my memory on you. But where would you like us to sit down and read the speech?

*Socrates.* Let us turn aside here, and go down by the Ilissus, and then wherever we find a spot to our taste 229 we will sit down and rest.

*Phæd.* How lucky that I happened to come out without my shoes—and you, Socrates, we know never wear them. Our easiest plan then is to walk down the streamlet with our feet in the water, and we shall find it by no means disagreeable, considering the season of the year, and the hour of the day.

*Socrates.* Come on then, and keep at the same time a look out for a seat.

*Phæd.* Do you see that towering plane-tree yonder?

*Socrates.* Of course I do.

*Phæd.* Well, there we shall find shade and a gentle breeze, and grass enough for a seat, or if we prefer it, for a bed.

*Socrates.* Let us walk towards it.

*Phæd.* Tell me, *Socrates*, was it not from somewhere hereabouts on the Ilissus that Boreas is said to have carried off Orithyia?

*Socrates.* So the tale goes.

*Phæd.* Must it not have been from this very spot? So beautiful is the water here, so clear and transparent, and just such as one can fancy maidens loving to play by.

*Socrates.* No, not here, but about a quarter of a mile lower down, just where we cross over to the temple of the Huntress. And if I am not mistaken, there is an altar on the spot to Boreas.

*Phæd.* I have never noticed it. But tell me honestly, *Socrates*, do you believe this tale of mythology to be true?

*Socrates.* Why, I should do nothing strangely out of the way if I *were* to refuse to it credit, as the learned do; and go on in their rationalizing method to say that as the girl was playing with *Pharmacæa* she was blown over the adjoining cliffs by a blast of the wind Boreas; and that having met with her death in this manner, she was fabled to have been carried off by the god Boreas—either from this place, or if you like from Mars's hill, which, according to another account, was the scene of her adventure. But for my part, *Phædrus*, though I consider such explanations sufficiently pretty, yet I esteem them the peculiar province of a very subtle, painstaking, and by no means particularly enviable person; if for no other reason than that he will be called upon, as soon as he has finished this subject, to set us right as to the form of the Hippocentaurs, and again as to that of the Chimæra, and then he will have pouring in upon him a like crowd of Gorgons and Pegasuses, and such a wondrous host of portentous and impossible creations, that if he were to disbelieve them all, and, with a kind of vulgar acuteness, apply to each succes-

sively the test of probability, he would require no small amount of time and labour for his task. But I have no leisure for such studies—and the reason, my friend, is this : I cannot as yet obey the Delphic inscription, which bids me know myself ; and it seems to me ridiculous for one who is still destitute of this knowledge to busy himself with matters which in no wise concern him. I therefore leave these subjects alone, and acquiescing in the received opinion regarding them, I devote myself, as I just now said, to the study, not of fables, but of my own self, that I may see whether I am really a more complicated and a more furious monster than Typhon, or a creature of a gentler and a simpler sort, the born heir of a divine and tranquil nature. But by the by, Phædrus, was not this the tree to which you were leading me? 230

*Phæd.* The very one.

*Socrates.* Well, really, this is a glorious resting-place. For the plane-tree I find is thick and spreading, as well as tall, and the size and shadiness of the agnus castus here is very beautiful, and being at the height of its flower, it must render our retreat most fragrant. How delicious too is this spring trickling under the plane-tree, and how cold its water, to judge by the foot ! It would seem from these images and votive offerings that the place is sacred to some nymphs and river-god. Again, how lovely and enjoyable above measure is the airiness of the spot ! summer-like and clear there rings an answer to the choir of the cicadas. But the most charming thing of all is this abundant grass, with its gentle slope just made for the head to fall back on luxuriously. Really, Phædrus, you make a most admirable guide.

*Phæd.* And you, Socrates, are a most unaccountable being. In fact, as you say, you are just like a stranger who is being shown the beauties of the place, and not like a native of the country ; the consequence this of your never leaving the city either to cross the frontier, or even, I do believe, for so much as a walk outside the walls.

*Socrates.* You must bear with me, dear Phædrus—I

am so fond of learning. Now trees, you know, and fields cannot teach me anything, but men in the city can. You, however, would appear to have discovered the charm that can entice me out. For as shepherds draw after them their hungry flocks by shaking branches or grain up and down before their eyes, so could you, I believe, make me follow you, not only all round Attica, but also wherever else you might wish to lead, by simply holding out to me a written speech as a bait. And since we have reached this spot on the present occasion, I cannot do better than lay me down to listen, and do you choose that posture which you think most convenient for reading in, and begin the speech.

*Phæd.* Attend then :

“With the state of my affairs you are acquainted, and how I expect advantage to us both from this arrangement you have heard. Now I claim not to be disappointed in my suit on the ground of my not belonging to the number of your lovers. For they repent of the benefits they have conferred the moment that their desire ceases; but for us, who never love, there is no particular time at which we may be expected to change our minds. For it is not under the influence of a restless passion, but of our own free choice that we do you a kindness, consulting what our means will allow, and what is best for our interests to bestow. Again, lovers take into consideration the derangement of their private affairs which their love has occasioned, and the services they have rendered their favourites; and adding all the trouble they have taken to the reckoning, they conceive that by all this they have long ago paid the return which is due to the object of their affection. We, on the other hand, are not able to pretend that we have neglected our fortunes for love; we cannot take into account the labours we have endured, nor plead the domestic quarrels which have resulted from our devotion; so that, as our suit is divested of all such evils as these, we have nothing left us but cheerfully to do whatever we may think we shall please you by performing. Again, if it be a fair reason for setting store on a lover, that he professes greater attachment for his favourite than for

any one else, and is ready both by word and deed to incur the enmity of all the world beside, if he can but gratify the object of his passion, it is easy to perceive that if his profession be a true one, all of whom he may hereafter become enamoured, will be held of greater account than his earlier love, and it is clear that, if the former wish it, he will not hesitate to do even harm to the latter. And how can you think it reasonable to lavish so costly a treasure on one suffering under a fatal infliction, which no man acquainted with its nature would even attempt to avert; when even the sufferer himself owns that his mind is diseased, and that he knows his own folly, but cannot restrain it? And when this man is restored to his senses, how can he possibly judge that to be well done about which he was so desirous when in such a state of mind? And further, if you were to select the best from among your lovers, your choice would be made from a small number; but if from the rest of the world you were to select the man who is most suitable to yourself, it would be made from a large number; so that there is far more reason to expect that in the larger number exists the one who is deserving of your attachment. If, moreover, you stand in awe of public opinion, and dread its reproaches on the affair being discovered, it is but natural to suppose that lovers, from an idea that others will deem <sup>232</sup> them as happy as they esteem themselves, will be so elated as to talk of their intimacy, and with ostentatious vanity give all men to know that their labour has not been spent in vain; but that we on the other hand, who by never loving, never lose the dominion over ourselves, should prefer what is truly advantageous to any celebrity that is to be had in the world. Again, men cannot help hearing and seeing how lovers run after their favourites, and that too with elaborate parade; so that the mere fact of their being seen together is sufficient to give rise to suspicion; whereas no one would think of suspecting us for holding conversation with you, as they know that people cannot help talking with some one or other, either from friendship or for some other pleasure. And further, if you have ever conceived an alarm from

remembering how difficult it is for a friendship to last, and from the reflection, that in ordinary cases when a quarrel has taken place, the misfortune is felt equally on both sides, but that in love, as it is you who have lavished what you prize most highly, so it is you who will suffer most deeply by a rupture, let me remind you that here again it is those who are in love that you have most reason to look upon with terror. For many are the causes that irritate lovers, and they think that everything is done to hurt and annoy them. For which reason also they are anxious to deter you from associating with the world, fearing those who are possessed of substance, lest they outbid them with money, and those who are educated, lest they outshine them in ability; and so whatever may be the advantage a man possesses, they look with suspicion on his influence in that particular. If then they succeed in persuading you to abstain from society, they leave you at last without a friend in the world; but if, with an eye to your own interests, you adopt a different and wiser course, a quarrel will be the inevitable result. By us, on the other hand, who are not in love, but owe to our merit the accomplishment of our desires, no jealousy would be entertained for those who cultivate your acquaintance, but rather dislike for such as avoid it; as we should consider ourselves slighted by the neglect of the latter, but benefited by the intimacy of the former. And such being our feelings, surely you have reason to expect that friendship rather than hatred will result from our intercourse. And further, lovers frequently conceive a desire for the person before they have discovered the character or become acquainted with the other properties of their favourites, so that it is impossible for you to tell whether their disposition for friendship will outlast the continu-

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ance of their desire. But when passion has never existed, when your favours have been obtained by those who were your friends before, it is not likely that this friendship will be lessened by what has been the source of so much delight—rather will the memory of the past be an earnest of future attachment. And further, you must not forget the superior opportunities of improve-

ment which will be afforded you by favouring my suit. Lovers are so neglectful of your best interests, that they praise everything you say and do, partly for fear of giving offence, and partly because their own judgment is debased by their passion. For such are the caprices of love; if its victim be unsuccessful, it makes trifles which trouble no one else seem distressing to him; if successful, it exacts from him admiration for what contains no cause of satisfaction. So that I consider pity to be far more suitable than congratulation for the objects of such an attachment. I on the other hand, if you yield to my wishes, will associate with you on the following terms. Not consulting our present gratification so much as our future advantage; not enslaved by passion, but master of myself; not ready to contract a violent animosity on slight provocation, but slow to conceive a moderate displeasure for serious offences, I will freely pardon all involuntary faults, while such as are intentional I will endeavour to correct. For such conduct is a sure sign of a friendship that will long endure. But if the thought, as is not unlikely, has suggested itself to you, that it is impossible for attachment to be strong if unaccompanied by passion, you ought to bear in mind, that in that case we should care but little either for our sons or for our fathers and mothers, nor should we ever possess faithful friends on any other footing than an amatory connection. Again, if it is proper to bestow favours most on those who need them most, it follows that from the world in general you ought to select, not the best, but the neediest as the objects of your charity—for the greater the misery they are rescued from, the greater is the debt of gratitude they will owe you. Nay further, when you give an entertainment, you will be expected to ask not friends to your board, but those who beg an invitation and require a meal; for they will be charmed with your kindness, and will follow in your train and throng your doors, and express themselves highly delighted and deeply grateful, and invoke countless blessings on your head. It may be thought that this is not the true ground of selection; it may be that you ought to bestow your

favours, not on those who need them most, but on those who are best able to repay them; not on lovers merely, but on those who are worthy of the favour in question; not on men who will enjoy the flower of your youth, but on those who in your more advanced years will share with you *their* fortunes; not on such as when they have achieved their purpose will parade their success to the world, but on such as from feelings of delicacy will never open their mouths on the subject; not on suitors who sue you with a short-lived enthusiasm, but on friends who will continue friends all your life long; not on men, who when they are released from their passion, will seek some pretext for a quarrel, but on those who when your bloom is faded, will then display their own true excellence. Remember now, I pray you, all I have said; and also bear in mind that lovers are taken to task by their friends on the score that their course of life is a bad one; whereas never have those who do not love been reproached by any of their relatives with neglecting on that account their private affairs. You may perhaps ask me whether I recommend you to bestow your favours on all who do not love you. But neither, I imagine, would a lover bid you entertain such sentiments towards all your lovers alike. No, if you view the matter reasonably, you cannot consider such conduct deserving of equal gratitude, nor, however you might wish it, would you be equally able to preserve the affair secret from the world. And harm, you must remember, ought to accrue to neither from the transaction; advantage should rather result to both.

"My suit has now been urged with arguments which for my part I deem convincing—should you see in them any defect or omission, they are open to any questions you may choose to ask."

Well, Socrates, what do you think of the speech? Is it not wonderfully fine, especially in point of language? *Socrates.* Nay, divinely, my good friend; it quite threw me into an ecstasy. And this sensation I owe to you, Phædrus; for all the time you were reading, I kept my eye on your face, and saw it glow with rapture under the influence of the speech. And esteeming you a better



judge in such matters than myself, I thought I could not do better than follow your example, and so I have shared with you in all your transports, my god-inspired friend.

*Phæd.* Nay, Socrates, always so bent on jesting?

*Socrates.* Jestings! don't you believe I am in earnest?

*Phæd.* Oh, no more of this, Socrates; but tell me honestly as you love me, do you believe that any man in Greece could write more ably and fully on the same subject?

*Socrates.* How do you mean, Phædrus? Are we required to praise the speech for the fitness of its subject-matter, or merely on the ground that every word in it is clear, and rounded and polished off with a nice precision? If on the former ground as well, it is only to please you that I can comply, since for my part my incapacity is such, that I observed no excellence of the kind. For I was merely directing my attention to its <sup>235</sup> rhétorical merit, though this I did not imagine even Lysias himself would consider sufficient. In fact, I thought, Phædrus—please correct me if I am wrong—that he repeated the same things two or three times over, as though he found it no such easy matter to say much on one subject. Perhaps, though, it was that he did not mind this sort of thing; nay, I could even fancy that he was showing off with a young man's display the power he possessed of expressing his ideas in two different ways, and in both with the finest possible language.

*Phæd.* You are quite wrong, Socrates; the very merit which you deny is to be found in the speech in even an eminent degree. Of all appropriate topics which the subject contained, it has not omitted a single one; so that I am sure, that after what he has said, no one could ever support the same position at greater length, or with arguments of greater value.

*Socrates.* On this point, Phædrus, it will be no longer in my power to agree with you. For wise men and women of old time, who have written and spoken on the subject, will rise up and bear witness against me, if out of complaisance to you I make this concession.

*Phæd.* Whom do you mean? where have you ever heard the subject better treated?

*Socrates.* I cannot say just at the moment, though I am sure I have heard it somewhere, either perhaps by the fair Sappho, or the sage Anacreon, or may be by some prose writer or other. What leads me, you will ask, to this conclusion? The fact is, my worthy Phædrus, that my breast, I know not how, is full of matter, and I feel that I could be delivered of a speech different from, and in no wise inferior to this. Now that I have invented none of it myself, I am confident, as I am no stranger to my own stupidity. It remains then, I think, that like a pitcher I have been filled, through my ears, from some foreign source; but here again so stupid am I, that I have quite forgotten both how and where I gained my information.

*Phæd.* Never mind, Socrates, you have told me most excellent tidings; don't trouble yourself about telling me how or from whom you heard it, but just do the very thing that you say. Undertake to produce a speech of equal length and merit with that which I have got written here, without availing yourself of any of its arguments, and for my part I promise you, after the fashion of the nine archons, that I will dedicate to the god at Delphi a golden statue as large as life, not only of myself, but also of you.

*Socrates.* You are very kind, Phædrus, and quite deserve the statue of gold, if you understand me to mean that Lysias missed his mark altogether, and that it is possible to produce a speech which shall contain nothing that he said. No, I do not think this could be done with even the most worthless writer. Since, to take our present subject, do you suppose that any man who was maintaining the superior claims of the unimpassioned to those of the impassioned suitor, would be able to proceed with his arguments if he were to omit lauding the sanity of the one, and blaming the insanity  
236 of the other? these being topics which are necessarily inherent in the proposition. No, such arguments ought, I think, to be allowed and conceded to the author; and in all such it is not the invention, but the arrangement

that should be admired; whereas in those which, instead of being impossible to miss are difficult to find, the invention as well as the arrangement may claim our approval.

*Phæd.* I admit the distinction, as it appears to me to be fairly stated. And what is more, I will act up to it. I will allow you to assume that a man in love is in a more diseased condition than one who is not in love, and if, when this point is put out of the question on both sides, you surpass Lysias in the number and value of your arguments, you may expect to figure in massive gold at Olympia by the side of the offering of the Cypselidæ.

*Socrates.* You have taken it quite to heart, Phædrus, that in teasing you I have laid hold upon your favourite; and I see you expect that I shall really attempt, in emulation of his skill, to produce something still more skilfully wrought.

*Phæd.* For that matter, my friend, you have given me quite as good a hold on you. For speak you must as well as you are able; there is no help for it. But do take care that we are not compelled to have recourse to the vulgar stage-trick of retorting upon each other; pray don't force me to say as you did just now: "My good Socrates, if you don't know Socrates, I don't know Phædrus any longer;" and again, "Socrates is dying to speak, but affects to be coy." No, make up your mind that we will not stir from this spot, till you have disclosed what you said your heart contained. For here we are by ourselves in a retired place, and I am the younger and stronger man of the two. All which things being considered, you had better mind what I say, and determine to speak of your own free will rather than by compulsion.

*Socrates.* But really, Phædrus, it would be ludicrous in a novice like me to set myself in comparison with an experienced author, and extemporize on a subject which he has discussed.

*Phæd.* I'll tell you what it is, Socrates; you must let me have no more of this coquetting; as I am pretty sure I have that to say which will compel you to speak.

*Socrates.* Pray don't say it then.

*Phæd.* Nay, but I will, and here it is. And it shall be in the form of an oath. I swear to you—by whom, by what god shall I swear? Shall it be by this plane-tree? Yes, by this plane I swear, that if you do not produce your speech here before her, I will never again either report or recite to you the speech of any author whatsoever.

*Socrates.* Ah, wretch, well have you discovered the means of compelling a speech-enamoured man to do your bidding, whatever it be!

*Phæd.* What makes you hang back, then?

*Socrates.* I will do so no more, since you, Phædrus, have sworn this oath. For how could I ever have the heart to exclude myself from such a feast?

237 *Phæd.* Begin then.

*Socrates.* Shall I tell you what I mean to do?

*Phæd.* About what?

*Socrates.* I mean to speak with my face covered, that I may hurry through the speech as quickly as possible, and not break down for shame, by looking at you.

*Phæd.* Well, do but speak, and you may settle everything else as you like.

*Socrates.* Come now, ye Muses called Ligæan, whether it be to the nature of your sonæ, or to the music-loving race of the Ligyans that ye owe the name,—come help me in the tale which my kind friend here is forcing me to tell, in order that his favourite, who even heretofore seemed to him to be wise, may now seem wiser than ever.

There was once upon a time a boy, say rather a youth, of surpassing beauty. Now this youth had very many lovers; but one of them was a cunning fellow, who though he loved him no less warmly than his rivals, had made the youth believe that he loved him not. And one day as he was urging his suit, he undertook to prove this very point, that the dispassionate suitor had a better claim on his favour than the impassioned lover. And here is his proof.

On every subject, my friend, there is but one mode of beginning for those who would deliberate well. They

must know what the thing is on which they are deliberating, or else of necessity go altogether astray.\* Most men, however, are blind to the fact that they are ignorant of the essential character of each individual thing. Fancying therefore that they possess this knowledge, they come to no mutual understanding at the outset of their inquiry, and in the sequel they exhibit the natural consequence, an inconsistency with themselves and each other. Let not you and me then fall into the error which we condemn in others, but since the question before us is, whether love or the absence of love is desirable in friendship; let us first establish by mutual consent a definition of love that will explain its nature and its powers, and then, with this to look back upon and refer to, let us proceed to consider whether it is profitable or injurious in its results. Now that love is a kind of desire is clear to every one, and equally clear is it on the other hand, that without being in love we desire beautiful objects. How then are we to mark the lover? We should further observe, that in every one of us there are two ruling and directing principles, whose guidance we follow wherever they may lead, the one being an innate desire of pleasure; the other, an acquired judgment which aspires after excellence. Now these two principles at one time maintain harmony, while at another they are at feud within us, and now one and now the other obtains the mastery. When judgment leads us with sound reason to virtue, <sup>238</sup> and asserts its authority, we assign to that authority the name of temperance; but when desire drags us irrationally to pleasures, and has established its sway within us, that sway is denominated excess. Now excess, you must know, is a thing of many names, as it is of many parts and many forms. And of these forms, that which may happen to have obtained the predominance brands its possessor with its name, and that one neither honourable nor worth possessing. For instance, when desire in regard of eating gets the better of the highest reason and the other desires, it will be termed gluttony, and cause its possessor to be called a glutton. If again it has usurped dominion in the matter of drinking, and

drags the individual affected by it in this direction, I need not say what designation it will acquire. And since in general names akin to these names are applied to desires akin to these desires, it is sufficiently clear what is the proper appellation of the desire which for the time being happens to be dominant. Now my motive for introducing these previous remarks must by this time be pretty well evident; but nothing is so clear that it does not admit of becoming clearer by being spoken. When desire, having rejected reason and overpowered judgment which leads to right, is set in the direction of the pleasure which beauty can inspire, and when again under the influence of its kindred desires it is moved with violent motion towards the beauty of corporeal forms, it acquires a surname from this very violent motion, and is called love. But by the way, my dear Phædrus, do I appear to you, as I do to myself, to have been speaking under some influence divine?

*Phæd.* There certainly can be no doubt, Socrates, that an unusual kind of fluency has come upon you.

*Socrates.* Harken then in silence to my words, for in very truth the place where we are sitting seems holy ground. So that if haply in the course of my oration I become entranced by the spirits of the spot, you must not marvel thereat; for my present utterance falls no longer far short of a dithyrambic strain.

*Phæd.* Most true; it does not.

*Socrates.* And for this, Phædrus, you are answerable. But listen to the remainder of my speech, for it may be that I shall escape the trance. This, however, will be as Heaven pleases; for ourselves, we must return in our discourse to the beautiful boy.

Come then, my excellent youth. Since the definition of the subject under discussion has been stated and accurately marked, let us now keep this in our view, while we proceed to consider what advantage or injury is likely to result to you from favouring the wishes of an impassioned and unimpassioned suitor respectively. If a man be governed by desire and the slave of pleasure, he must of necessity, I think, endeavour to render his beloved the source of as much pleasure to himself as he

possibly can. Now, to a sick man everything gives <sup>239</sup> pleasure that does not oppose itself to his wishes, but whatever asserts a superiority or even an equality, excites his dislike. A lover, therefore, if he can help it, will not bear his favourite to be either superior to or on a level with himself, but is always striving to lower him and make him his inferior. Now ignorance is inferior to learning, cowardice to courage, incapacity as a speaker to oratorical skill, heaviness of intellect to a ready wit. Such, among many others, are the mental defects which a lover must needs rejoice to find in his loved one if they are naturally inherent, and which, if they result from education, he must endeavour to instil, or else forfeit his immediate gratification. The consequence is, that your lover will regard you with a jealous eye, and by debarring you from many valuable acquaintances, the cultivation of which would be most conducive to your growth in manliness, he will do you serious harm, and the greatest harm of all by excluding you from that which would make you truly wise; I mean the study of Divine Philosophy, from which your lover will be sure to keep you as far as possible asunder, for fear of your there learning to despise him. And not content with this, he will so scheme as to leave you in total ignorance of every subject whatever, so that on every subject you may be compelled to look to him for information, as this is the condition for you to be in that will cause him the keenest delight, but yourself the most ruinous harm. So far then as mental improvement is concerned, you cannot have a less profitable guide and companion than a suitor who is under the influence of love.

Let us now proceed to consider what will be your corporeal habit, and what your course of bodily discipline, if you have for your lord and master a man who cannot help pursuing pleasure in preference to virtue. Such a person will be seen running after a delicate stripling, not hardy in frame nor reared beneath a scorching sun, but fondled under the shade of bending trees; a stranger to manly toil and healthy sweatings, but no stranger to the softness of a woman's life, deck-

ing his person with false colours and ornaments, in lack of nature's graces, and given in short to all such practices as are the natural concomitants of these. What they are, you know so well that I need not dilate on them further; but, summing them up under one general head, I will proceed to another branch of my subject. They are such that the youth whose body is trained in them will not fail in time of battle and all serious emergencies to inspire his enemies with confidence, but his friends and lovers with alarm.

To pass from these obvious reflections, let us in the next place examine what advantage or what injury to your fortune we may expect to find resulting from the companionship and management of a lover. Clear it must be to every one, and to the lover himself most of all, that there is nothing he would pray for so earnestly as for the object of his attachment to be deprived of his dearest, fondest, and holiest treasures. Gladly would he see him bereft of father and mother, of relations and  
 240 friends, as in them he views only so many censors and obstacles in the way of that commerce with his beloved which he loves most dearly. Moreover, if a youth be possessed of property in gold or other kind of substance, he will not appear so ready a prey, nor so easy of management when caught in the toils. And thus it cannot possibly be but that a lover will grudge his favourite the possession of fortune, and rejoice sincerely in its loss. Nay more, he would fain have him remain as long as possible without wife, or child, or home, in his desire of reaping for the longest time he can the full enjoyment of his own delights.

There are, I am aware, other evils beside this in the world, though few with which some deity has not mingled a temporary gratification. A parasite, for instance, is a shocking and a baneful monster, yet still nature has infused into his blandishments a not unpolished charm. A mistress, moreover, may be condemned as a dangerous evil; and the same objection may be made to a variety of similar creatures and pursuits, which are yet capable of affording, for the passing hour at least, the keenest enjoyment. But a lover,



beside being detrimental to his favourite, is of all distasteful things the most distasteful in daily intercourse. We are told by an ancient saying, that youth is pleased with youth, and age with age: I suppose because a similarity of years leading to a similarity of pleasures, by virtue of resemblance, engenders friendship. But yet the intercourse even of equals is not unattended by satiety. And further, in every transaction every one, it is said, finds compulsion irksome; and this is an evil which, in addition to their want of sympathy, is felt in the highest degree by the favourite in the society of his lover. For an old man is the companion of a young one, never leaving him if he can help it by day or by night, but driven onward by a resistless frenzy, which is all the while ministering to him indeed exquisite pleasure as long as by his sight, his hearing, his touch, his every sense, he is made aware of the presence of the beautiful boy, so that he would love nothing better than to cling to his side unceasingly; but as for the object of that attachment, what kind of solace, I ask, or what pleasure, can he possibly receive in return to save him during all that long companionship from reaching the very extremity of disgust; when he has ever before his eyes the bloomless countenance of age, and that too with all those accompaniments which we cannot hear even spoken of without repugnance, much less feel actually forced upon us by an ever-pressing necessity; when he has, moreover, on every occasion, and in all company to be on his guard against censorious observation; when he has to listen either to unseasonable and extravagant praises, or, with equal probability, to unendurable reproaches from his lover's sober caprice, while from his drunken excess he may expect an unveiled and loathsome licentiousness of speech, which is not only intolerable, but infamous to hear.

And if, during the continuance of his passion, a lover is at once hurtful and disgusting, as surely, when his passion is over, will he be for the remainder of his life a traitor to one whom with many promises, aye, and many an oath and prayer he could scarcely prevail on to endure the present burden of his society in hope of 241

future advantage. Yes, I say, at the time when payment should be made, he finds that he has received within his breast a new ruler and a new lord, to wit, wisdom and temperance, in the stead of passion and madness, and that he is become a new man, without his favourite being conscious of the change. So the youth demands a return for former favours, and reminds him of all that has passed between them in word and deed, under the impression that he is speaking to the same person. But the other, for very shame, dares neither avow the alteration that has come upon him, nor can he bring himself to fulfil the oaths and promises of that former insensate reign, now that wisdom and temperance have set their throne in his heart, for fear that, if he should act as he did before, he might become like what he was before, and return back again to his old condition. And thus it is that he is a runaway, and of necessity a defrauder, where once he was a lover, and in the turning of a potsherd is changed from pursuer into pursued: for the youth is compelled to give chase with indignation and curses, having, alas! been ignorant from the very first, that he ought not to bestow his favours on one who was in love, and of consequence a madman, but much rather on one who did not love and retained his senses; as in the former case he would have to surrender himself to a faithless, peevish, jealous wretch, who would do harm to his substance, and harm to his bodily habit, but far the greatest harm to the cultivation of his soul, than which in the eyes both of gods and men there neither is nor ever will be ought more dearly prized. Think deeply, my beautiful boy, on the words I have spoken, and remember that a lover's friendship is no attachment of good will, but that with an appetite which lusts for repletion,

As wolves love lambs, so lovers love their loves.

Ah, Phædrus, the very thing I dreaded! You must not expect to hear another word from me, but be content that my speech should terminate here.

*Phæd.* Why, Socrates, I thought it was only half

finished, and that it would have quite as much to say in supporting the claim of the unimpassioned suitor, and enumerating the advantages which he has to offer in opposition. How is it then that you are leaving off now?

*Socrates.* Did you not observe, my learned friend, that I had already got beyond dithyrambics, and was giving utterance to epics, and that too, while engaged in blaming? Pray what do you imagine will become of me, if I commence a panegyric? don't you know that of a certainty I shall be lifted into ecstasy by the nymphs to whose influence you have designedly exposed me? For fear then of such a fate, I tell you in a single word, that for all the evil I have spoken of the one, I attribute just the opposite good to the other. And what need of a protracted discourse, when enough has been said upon both sides? And thus my tale will meet with that reception which it deserves: and for myself I will cross the stream, and go home before you force me into some- 242  
thing more serious still.

*Phæd.* Not yet, Socrates, not till the heat of the day is past. Don't you see that the sun is already near standing still at high noon, as they phrase it? so pray wait, and let us talk over together what has been said, and return home as soon as it becomes cool.

*Socrates.* You are a strange person with your speeches, Phædrus; you quite amaze me. I do believe, that of all the speeches that have been composed during your lifetime, a greater number owe their existence to you than to any other person in the world, whether they be of your own composition, or extorted from some one else by fair means or foul. If we except Simmias of Thebes, there is no one who will bear competition with you. And now again I believe we shall find another speech which will have to thank you for its delivery.

*Phæd.* No bad tidings these, certainly; but how is this the case, and what speech do you mean?

*Socrates.* Just as I was about to cross the river, I was made aware of my divine monitor's wonted sign—now it never occurs save to deter me from something or other I am intending to do—and methought too, that I

heard a voice from this very spot, forbidding me to depart hence till I had purified myself, as though I had been guilty of some offence against Heaven. Now, you must know, I possess something of prophetic skill, though no very great amount, but, like indifferent writers, just enough for my own purposes. And thus it is that I have now at last a clear perception of my error. I say at last, because I can assure you, my good friend, that the soul is in some sort prophetic. For mine pricked me some time ago, as I was uttering that speech, and my face, as Ibycus says, was darkened for fear lest I might be purchasing honour on earth by some offence at the high court of heaven. But now I have discovered my sin.

*Phæd.* And pray what is it?

*Socrates.* That was a shocking, shocking speech which you brought here yourself, Phædrus, and so was the one you forced me to utter.

*Phæd.* In what way were they shocking?

*Socrates.* They were foolish, and somewhat impious withal; and what can be more shocking than this?

*Phæd.* Nothing, if your charge be a true one.

*Socrates.* And is it not? Don't you believe Love to be the son of Aphrodite, and a god?

*Phæd.* He is said to be so, certainly.

*Socrates.* Certainly not by Lysias, nor by that speech of yours which found utterance through my lips after they had been bewitched by you. No, if Love be, as indeed he is, a god, or of godly sort, he cannot be aught that is evil; yet as such he is represented in both our speeches. This, therefore, is the offence they were guilty of with regard to Love; and not only this, but with a *naïveté* that is highly amusing, though they do not utter a single sound or true word throughout, they yet talk as gravely as if they were of consequence, on  
 243 the strength, it may be, of expecting to impose upon some poor simpletons, and win a fair name among them. I therefore, for my part, Phædrus, must of necessity purify myself. And for all who sin in matter of legends, there is an ancient form of purification with which Stesichorus was acquainted, though Homer was

not. For when he was deprived of his eyesight for maligning Helen, he was not ignorant, like Homer, of the cause, but a true votary of the Muses, he learnt his fault, and straightway sang

False was my tale—unpassed the rolling sea,  
And Troy's proud turrets never viewed by thee.

And so, having composed all his palinode, as it is called, he immediately recovered his sight. I, however, will be wiser than either of those bards in one particular. Ere any evil befall me, for my defamation of Love, I will offer him my palinode by way of atonement, with my head bare, and no longer, as before, muffled up for shame.

*Phæd.* You could not have said anything that would give me greater pleasure than this.

*Socrates.* I believe you, my good friend; for you feel as well as I do, how shameless was the tone of both our speeches. For just conceive their being overheard by some gentleman of mild and generous feeling, who is either now, or has at some time past of his life been, enamoured of a youth of congenial disposition. If, for instance, he were to hear us maintaining that on slight provocation lovers contract violent animosities, and make both jealous and dangerous companions to their favourites, do you think it possible that he could help fancying himself listening to persons who had been bred among sailors, and had never witnessed an ingenuous passion, and would he not, think you, be very far from admitting the justice of our censures on love?

*Phæd.* I don't doubt it, Socrates.

*Socrates.* Out of delicacy then to such a lover as this, and for fear of the god of love himself, I desire by a fresh and sweet discourse to wash out, so to speak, the brackish taste of the stuff I have just uttered. And I would recommend Lysias, too, to make all the haste he can to prove that, under similar circumstances, the suit of a lover should be preferred to that of one who is not in love.

*Phæd.* You need have no doubt of this being done, Socrates. If you deliver your panegyric on love, Lysias

most certainly shall not escape composing another on the same side.

*Socrates.* Well, I can trust you for this, so long as you are the man you are.

*Phæd.* Speak on then with confidence.

*Socrates.* But where, I want to know, is the boy to whom I addressed my former speech, as I should be sorry for him to run away without hearing this as well, and favour in his haste the suit of an unimpassioned wooer.

*Phæd.* Here he is by your side, quite ready for you when you want him.

*Socrates.* You must understand then, my beautiful  
244 boy, that my late speech was the production of the gay Phædrus, son of the fame-loving Pythocles, the nursling of the myrtle-beds of Myrrhinus; but that I am indebted for the one I am now about to deliver to the inspired bard Stesichorus, son of the holy Euphemus, bred at Himera in the mysteries of love. Now, it must begin on this wise :

False is the tale which says that when a lover is present, favour ought rather to be shown to one, who is no lover, on the score, forsooth, of the one being mad and the other sane. For if it were true, without exception, that madness is an evil, there would be no harm in the assertion; but as it is, we owe our greatest blessings to madness, if only it be granted by Heaven's bounty. For the prophetess at Delphi, you are well aware, and the priestesses of Dodona, have in their moments of madness done great and glorious service to the men and the cities of Greece, but little or none in their sober mood. And if we were to speak of the Sibyl and all others, that by exercise of inspired divination have told beforehand many things to many men, and thereby guided them aright in their future courses, we should run to a great length in telling only what every one knows. There is one fact, however, to which it would be worth our while solemnly to appeal; I mean that, in the opinion of the name-givers of ancient times, madness was no disgrace or reproach; else they would never have attached this very name to that most glorious art

whereby the future is discerned. No, it was because they judged of it as a glorious thing when inspired by Heaven's grace, that they gave it the name of *μανική*: it is only the vulgar taste of a later age, that by inserting the *tau* has made it *μαντική* instead. Since you will find, in like manner, that the investigation of the future, which is carried on by people in their senses through the medium of birds and other signs, received at first the name of *οιονοιστική*, inasmuch as by means of thought, men furnished themselves out of their own minds with intelligence and information; but moderns, not content with this word, gave it dignity with their long *o*, and called it *ολωνοιστική*. As much then as divination is a more perfect, and a more precious thing than augury both in name and efficiency, so much more glorious, by the testimony of the ancients, is madness than sober sense, the inspiration of Heaven than the creation of men. Again, for those sore plagues and dire afflictions, which you are aware lingered in certain families as the wraith of some old ancestral guilt, madness devised a remedy, after it had entered into the heart of the proper persons, and to the proper persons revealed its secrets; for it fled for refuge to prayer and services of the gods, and thence obtaining purifications and atoning rights, it made the sufferer whole for time present and time to come, by showing him the way of escape from the evils that encompassed him, if only he were rightly frenzied and possessed. And thirdly, there is a possession and a madness inspired by the Muses, which seizes upon a tender and a virgin soul, and, stirring it up to rapturous frenzy, adorns in ode and other verse the countless deeds of elder time for the instruction of after ages. But whosoever without the madness of the Muses comes to knock at the doors of poesy, from the conceit that haply by force of art he will become an efficient poet, departs with blasted hopes, and his poetry, the poetry of sense, fades into obscurity before the poetry of madness.

Such, and yet more, are the glorious results I can tell you of as proceeding from a madness inspired by the gods. Let us not therefore regard with apprehension

the particular result we are considering, nor be perplexed and frightened by any arguments into the belief that we ought to select the sensible rather than the enraptured man as our friend. No, our opponent must not carry off the palm of victory till he has likewise made it evident, that for no good is love sent from heaven to lover and beloved. With us, on the other hand, rests the proof that such a madness as this is given by God to man for his highest possible happiness. Now my proof, I am aware, will meet with no credit from the subtle disputant, but in the eyes of the truly wise it will be convincing. First of all, then, I must investigate the truth with regard to the nature of the soul, both human and divine, by observing its conditions and powers. And thus do I begin my demonstration.

Every soul is immortal—for whatever is in perpetual motion is immortal. Now the thing which moves another and is by another moved, as it may cease to be moved, may cease also to live; it is only that which moves itself, inasmuch as it never quits itself, that never ceases moving, but is to everything else that is moved a source and beginning of motion. Now a beginning is uncreate; for everything that is created must be created from a beginning, but a beginning itself from nothing whatever: for if a beginning were created from anything, it would not be a beginning. Again, since it is uncreate, it must also of necessity be indestructible. For if a beginning be destroyed, it can neither itself be at any time created from anything, nor can anything else be created from it, if, as is evidently true, everything must be created from a beginning. Thus we see then that that which is self-moved is the beginning of motion, and as being such can neither be created nor destroyed; else must all the universe and all creation collapse and come to a standstill, and never at any time find that whereby they may be again set in motion and come into being. And now that that which is moved by itself has been found to be immortal, none will hesitate to assert that this power of self-motion is implied in the very essence and definition of a soul. For every body which receives motion from without we call soulless;



but that which receives motion from within of itself, we say is possessed of soul, as though in this lay the soul's very nature. And if it be true, that that which is self-moved is nothing else than the soul, it follows of necessity that the soul must be a thing both uncreate and 246 immortal. For its immortality let this suffice.

In considering its form let us proceed in the following manner. To explain what the soul is, would be a long and most assuredly a god-like labour; to say what it resembles, is a shorter and a human task. Let us attempt then the latter; let us say that the soul resembles the combined efficacy of a pair of winged steeds and a charioteer. Now the horses and drivers of the gods are all both good themselves and of good extraction, but the character and breed of all others is mixed. In the first place, with us men the supreme ruler has a pair of horses to manage, and then of these horses he finds one generous and of generous breed, the other of opposite descent and opposite character. And thus it necessarily follows that driving in our case is no easy or agreeable work. We must at this point endeavour to express what we mean respectively by a mortal and an immortal animal. All that is soul presides over all that is without soul, and patrols all heaven, now appearing in one form and now in another. When it is perfect and fully feathered it roams in upper air, and regulates the entire universe; but the soul that has lost its feathers is carried down till it finds some solid resting place; and when it has settled there, when it has taken to itself, that is, an earthly body, which seems capable of self-motion, owing to the power of its new inmate, the name of animal is given to the whole, to this compound, I mean, of soul and body, with the addition of the epithet mortal. The immortal, on the other hand, has received its name from the conclusion of no human reasoning; but without having either seen or formed any adequate conception of a god, we picture him to ourselves as an immortal animal, possessed of soul and possessed of body, and of both in intimate conjunction from all eternity. But this matter I leave to be and to be told as Heaven pleases—my task is to discover what is the cause that makes the

feathers fall off the soul. It is something, I conceive, of the following kind.

The natural efficacy of a wing is to lift up heavy substances, and bear them aloft to those upper regions which are inhabited by the race of the gods. And of all the parts connected with the body it has perhaps shared most largely (with the soul) in the divine nature. Now of this nature are beauty, wisdom, virtue, and all similar qualities. By these then the plumage of the soul is chiefly fostered and increased; by deformity, vice, and all such contraries, it is wasted and destroyed. Zeus, the great chieftain in heaven, driving a winged car, travels first, arranging and presiding over all things; and after him comes a host of gods and inferior deities, 247 marshalled in eleven divisions, for Hestia stays at home alone in the mansion of the gods; but all the other ruling powers that have their place in the number of the twelve march at the head of a troop in the order to which they have been severally appointed. Now there are, it is true, many ravishing views and opening paths within the bounds of heaven, whereon the family of the blessed gods go to and fro, each in performance of his own proper work; and they are followed by all who from time to time possess both will and power; for envy has no place in the celestial choir. But whenever they go to feast and revel, they forthwith journey by an uphill path to the summit of the heavenly vault. Now the chariots of the gods being of equal poise, and obedient to the rein, move easily, but all others with difficulty; for they are burdened by the horse of vicious temper, which sways and sinks them towards the earth, if haply he has received no good training from his charioteer. Whereupon there awaits the soul a crowning pain and agony. For those which we called immortal go outside when they are come to the topmost height, and stand on the outer surface of heaven, and as they stand they are borne round by its revolution, and gaze on the external scene. Now of that region beyond the sky no earthly bard has ever yet sung, or ever will sing in worthy strains." But this is the fashion of it; for sure I must venture to speak the truth, especially as truth

is my theme. Real existence, colourless, formless, and intangible, visible only to the intelligence which sits at the helm of the soul, and with which the family of true science is concerned, has its abode in this region. The mind then of deity, as it is fed by intelligence and pure science, and the mind of every soul that is destined to receive its due inheritance, is delighted at seeing the essence to which it has been so long a stranger, and by the light of truth is fostered and made to thrive, until, by the revolution of the heaven, it is brought round again to the same point. And during the circuit it sees distinctly absolute justice, and absolute temperance, and absolute science; not such as they appear in creation, nor under the variety of forms to which we now-a-days give the name of realities, but the justice, the temperance, the science, which exist in that which is real and essential being. And when in like manner it has seen all the rest of the world of essence, and feasted on the sight, it sinks down again into the interior of heaven, and returns to its own home. And on its arrival, the charioteer takes his horses to the manger, and sets before them ambrosia, and gives them nectar to drink with it. Such is the life of the gods; but of the 248 other souls, that which follows a god most closely and resembles him most nearly, succeeds in raising the head of its charioteer into the outer region, and is carried round with the immortals in their revolution, though sore encumbered by its horses, and barely able to contemplate the real existences; while another rises and sinks by turns, his horses plunging so violently that he can discern no more than a part of these existences. But the common herd follow at a distance, all of them indeed burning with desire for the upper world, but, failing to reach it, they make the revolution in the moisture of the lower element, trampling on one another, and striking against one another, in their efforts to rush one before the other. Hence ensues the extremest turmoil and struggling and sweating; and herein, by the awkwardness of the drivers, many souls are maimed, and many lose many feathers in the crush; and all after painful labour go away without being blessed by admis-

sion to the spectacle of truth, and thenceforth live on the food of mere opinion.

And now will I tell you the motives of this great anxiety to behold the fields of truth. The suitable pasturage for the noblest portion of the soul is grown on the meadows there, and it is the nature of the wing, which bears aloft the soul, to be fostered thereby; and moreover, there is an irrevocable decree, that if any soul has followed a god in close companionship and discerned any of the true essences, it shall continue free from harm till the next revolution, and if it be ever thus successful, it shall be ever thus unharmed: but whenever, from inability to follow, it has missed that glorious sight, and, through some mishap it may have encountered, has become charged with forgetfulness and vice, and been thereby so burdened as to shed its feathers and fall to the earth, in that case there is a law that the soul thus fallen be not planted in any bestial nature during the first generation, but that if it has seen more than others of essential verity, it pass into the germ of a man who is to become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or some votary of the Muses and Love; if it be of second rank, it is to enter the form of a constitutional ruler, a warrior, or a man fitted for command; the third will belong to a politician, or economist, or merchant; the fourth, to a laborious professor of gymnastics, or some disciple of the healing art; the fifth will be possessed by a soothsayer, or some person connected with mysteries; the sixth will be best suited by the life of a poet or some other imitative artist; the seventh, by the labour of an artisan or a farmer; the eighth, by the trade of a sophist or a demagogue; and the ninth, by the lot of an absolute monarch. And in all these various conditions those who have lived justly receive afterwards a better lot, those who have lived unjustly, a worse. For to that same place from which each soul set out, it does not return for ten thousand years; so long is it  
 249 before it recovers its plumage, unless it has belonged to a guileless lover of philosophy, or a philosophic lover of boys. But these souls, during their third millennium, if only they have chosen thrice in succession this form of

existence, do in this case regain their feathers, and at its conclusion wing their departure. But all the rest are, on the termination of their first life, brought to trial; and, according to their sentence, some go to the prison-houses beneath the earth, to suffer for their sins, while others, by virtue of their trial, are borne lightly upwards to some celestial spot, where they pass their days in a manner worthy of the life they have lived in their mortal form. But in the thousandth year both divisions come back again to share and choose their second life, and they select that which they severally please. And then it is that a human soul passes into the life of a beast, and from a beast who was once a man the soul comes back into a man again. For the soul which has never seen the truth at all can never enter into the human form; it being a necessary condition of a man that he should apprehend according to that which is called a generic form, which, proceeding from a variety of perceptions, is by reflection combined into unity. And this is nothing more nor less than a recollection of those things which in time past our soul beheld when it travelled in the company of the gods, and, looking high over what we now call real, lifted up its head into the region of eternal essence. And thus you see it is with justice, that the mind of the philosopher alone recovers its plumage, for to the best of its power it is ever fixed in memory on that glorious spectacle, by the contemplation of which the godhead is divine. And it is only by the right use of such memorials as these, and by ever perfecting himself in perfect mysteries, that a man becomes really perfect. But because such an one stands aloof from human interests, and is rapt in contemplation of the divine, he is taken to task by the multitude as a man demented, because the multitude do not see that he is by God inspired.

It will now appear what conclusion the whole course of our argument has reached with regard to the fourth kind of madness, with which a man is inspired whenever, by the sight of beauty in this lower world, the true beauty of the world above is so brought to his remembrance that he begins to recover his plumage,

and feeling new wings, longs to soar aloft, but the power failing him, gazes upward like a bird, and becomes heedless of all lower matters, thereby exposing himself to the imputation of being crazed. And the conclusion is this, that of all kinds of enthusiasm this is the best, as well in character as in origin, for those who possess it, whether fully or in part; and further, that he who loves beautiful objects must partake of this madness before he can deserve the name of lover. For though, as I said before, every man's soul has by the law of his birth been a spectator of eternal truth, or it  
250 would never have passed into this our mortal frame, yet still it is no easy matter for all to be reminded of their past by their present existence. It is not easy either for those who, during that struggle I told you of, caught but a brief glimpse of upper glories, nor for those who, after their fall to this world, were so unfortunate as to be turned aside by evil associations into the paths of wickedness, and so made to forget that holy spectacle. Few, few only are there left, with whom the world of memory is duly present. And these few, whenever they see here any resemblance of what they witnessed there, are struck with wonder, and can no longer contain themselves, though what it is that thus affects them they know not, for want of sufficient discernment. Now in the likenesses existing here of justice, and temperance, and all else which souls hold precious, there is no brightness; but through the medium of dull dim instruments, it is but seldom and with difficulty that people are enabled on meeting with the copies to recognize the character of the original. But beauty not only shone brightly on our view at the time when in the heavenly choir we, for our part, followed in the band of Zeus, as others in the bands of other gods, and saw that blissful sight and spectacle, and were initiated into that mystery which I fear not to pronounce the most blessed of all mysteries; for we who celebrated it were perfect and untainted by the evil that awaited us in time to come, and perfect too, and simple, and calm, and blissful were the visions which we were solemnly admitted to gaze upon in the purest light,

ourselves being no less pure, nor as yet entombed in that which we now drag about with us and call the body, being fettered to it as an oyster to his shell. Excuse my so far indulging memory, which has carried me to a greater length than I intended, in my yearning for a happiness that is past. I return to beauty. Not only, as I said before, did she shine brightly among her fellows there, but when we came hither we found her, through the medium of our clearest sense, gleaming far more clearly than them all. For sight is the keenest of our bodily senses, though it fails of distinguishing wisdom. For terrible would be the passion inspired by her, or by any other of those lovely realities, if they exhibited to the eye of sense any such clear resemblance of themselves as is the image afforded by beauty. No, to beauty alone is the privilege given of being at once most conspicuous and most lovely. The man, it is true, whose initiation is of ancient date, or who has lost his purity here, is slow in being carried hence to the essential beauty of the upper world, when he sees that which bears its name in this. Accordingly, he feels no reverence as he gazes on the beautiful object, but, abandoning himself to lust, attempts like a brute beast to gratify his appetite, and in his wanton approaches knows nor fear nor shame at this unnatural pursuit of pleasure. But whenever one who is fresh from those 251 mysteries, who saw much of that heavenly vision, beholds in any god-like face or form a successful copy of original beauty, he first of all feels a shuddering chill, and there creep over him some of those terrors that assailed him in that dire struggle; then, as he continues to gaze, he is inspired with a reverential awe, and did he not fear the repute of exceeding madness, he would offer sacrifice to his beloved as to the image of a god. Afterwards follow the natural results of his chill, a sudden change, a sweating and glow of unwonted heat. For he has received through his eyes the emanation of beauty, and has been warmed thereby, and his native plumage is watered. And by the warmth the parts where the feathers sprout are softened, after having been long so closed up by their hardness as to hinder

the feathers from growing. But as soon as this nourishing shower pours in, the quill of the feather begins to swell, and struggles to start up from the root, and spread beneath the whole surface of the soul; for in old time the soul was entirely feathered.

In this process, therefore, it boils and throbs all over, and exactly the same sensation which is experienced by children when cutting their teeth, a sensation of itching and soreness about their gums, is experienced by the soul of one who is beginning to put forth new wings; it boils and is sore, and tingles as it shoots its feathers. Whenever, indeed, by gazing on the beauty of the beloved object, and receiving from that beauty particles which fall and flow in upon it (and which are therefore called *ἔμπερος*, desire), the soul is watered and warmed, it is relieved from its pain, and is glad; but as soon as it is parted from its love, and for lack of that moisture is parched, the mouths of the outlets, by which the feathers start, become so closed up by drought, that they obstruct the shooting germs; and the germs being thus confined underneath, in company of the desire which has been infused, leap like throbbing arteries, and prick each at the outlet which is shut against it; so that the soul, being stung all over, is frantic with pain. But then again it calls to mind the beautiful one, and rejoices. And both these feelings being combined, it is sore perplexed by the strangeness of its condition, and not knowing what to do with itself, becomes frenzied, and in its frenzy can neither sleep by night, nor by day remain at rest, but runs to and fro with wistful look wherever it may expect to see the possessor of the beauty. And after it has seen him, and drunk in fresh streams of desire, it succeeds in opening the stoppages which absence had made, and taking breath, it enjoys a respite from sting and throe, and now again delights itself for the time being in that most delicious  
 252 pleasure. And therefore, if it can help, it never quits the side of its beloved, nor holds any one of more account than him, but forgets father and mother, and brothers, and friends, and though its substance be wasting by neglect, it regards that as nothing, and of all observances and decorums, on which it prided itself



once, it now thinks scorn, and is ready to be a slave and lie down as closely as may be allowed to the object of its yearnings; for, besides its reverence for the possessor of beauty, it has found in him the sole physician for its bitterest pains. Now this affection, my beautiful boy—you I mean to whom my speech is addressed—is called by mortals Eros (Love); on hearing its name among the gods, your young wit will naturally laugh. There are put forth, if I mistake not, by certain Homerids, out of their secret poems, two verses on Eros, of which the second is quite outrageous, and not at all particularly metrical. Thus they sing :

Him mortals indeed call winged Eros,  
But immortals Peteros (Flyer), for his flighty nature.

Now these verses you may believe or not believe, as you think proper; but whatever is thought of them, the cause of love, and the condition of lovers, is all the same, just as such as has been here stated.

Now, if it be one of the former followers of Zeus who is seized by love, he is able to bear in greater weight than others the burden of the wing-named god. But all who were in the service of Ares, and patrolled the heavens in his company, when they are taken captive by Love, and fancy themselves in aught injured by the object of their love, are thirsty of blood, and ready to immolate both themselves and their favourites. And so it is with the followers of the other gods. Every man spends his life in honouring and imitating to the best of his power that particular god of whose choir he was a member, so long as he is exempt from decay, and living his first generation here; and in keeping with the bent thus acquired, he conducts his intercourse and behaviour towards the beloved object, as well as all the world. Accordingly, each man chooses himself his love out of the ranks of beauty to suit his peculiar turn; and then, as though his choice were his god, he builds him up for himself, and attires him like a holy image, for the purpose of doing him reverence, and worshipping him with ecstatic festival. They then that belong to Zeus seek to have for their beloved one who resembles Zeus in his

soul. And so they look for a youth who is by nature a lover of wisdom, and fitted for command; and when they have found one, and become enamoured of him, they strive all they can to make him truly such. And if they have never previously entered upon this task, they now apply themselves to it, both seeking instruction from every possible quarter, and searching in their own souls. And this endeavour to discover the nature  
253 of their patron god, by following the track in themselves, is attended with success, by reason of their being ever constrained to gaze upon their god unflinchingly; and when they grasp him with their memory, they are inspired with his inspiration, and take from him their character and habits, so far as it is possible for man to partake of god. And attributing these blessings to their beloved, they love him still more dearly than ever; and whatever streams they may have drawn from Zeus, like the inspired draughts of the Bacchanals, they pour into their darling's soul, thereby making him resemble, as far as possible, the god whom they resemble themselves. Those again who followed in the train of Hera, search out a youth of kingly mould, and when he is found, act towards him in exactly the same manner as the former. And so it is with the adherents of Apollo, and all other gods. Walking themselves in the steps of their own proper god, they look for the youth whom they are to love to be of kindred nature; and when they have gained such an one, both by imitation on their own part, and by urging and attuning the soul of their beloved, they guide him into the particular pursuit and character of that god, so far as they are severally able, not treating him with jealous or illiberal harshness, but using every endeavour to bring him into all possible conformity with themselves and the god whom they adore. So beautiful is the desire of those who truly love; and if they accomplish their desire, so beautiful is the initiation, as I call it, into their holy mystery, and so fraught with blessing at the hand of the friend, whom love has maddened, to the object of the friendship, if he be but won. Now he who is won, is won in the following manner.

As at the commencement of this account I divided every soul into three parts, two of them resembling horses, and the third a charioteer, so let us here still keep to that division. Now of the horses one, if you remember, we said, was good, and the other bad; but wherein consists the goodness of the one, and the badness of the other, is a point which, not distinguished then, must be stated now. That horse of the two which occupies the nobler rank, is in form erect and firmly knit, high-necked, hook-nosed, white-coloured, black-eyed; he loves honour with temperance and modesty, and, a votary of genuine glory, he is driven without stroke of the whip by voice and reason alone. The bad horse, on the other hand, is crooked, bulky, clumsily put together, with thick neck, short throat, flat face, black coat, grey and bloodshot eyes, a friend to all riot and insolence, shaggy about the ears, dull of hearing, scarce yielding to lash and goad united. Whenever therefore the driver sees the sight which inspires love, and his whole soul being thoroughly heated by sense, is surcharged with irritation and the stings of desire, the obedient horse, yielding then as ever to the check of 254 shame, restrains himself from springing on the loved one; but the other pays heed no longer to his driver's goad or lash, but struggles on with unruly bounds, and doing all violence to his yoke-fellow and master, forces them to approach the beautiful youth, and bethink themselves of the joys of dalliance. And though at first they resist him with indignation at the lawless and fearful crime he is urging, yet at last when there is no end to the evil, they move onward as he leads them, having yielded him submission and agreed to do his bidding. So they all come up to the beautiful boy, and see his countenance gleaming with beauty. But as the driver looks, his memory is carried back to the essence of beauty, and again he sees her by the side of Continence standing on a holy pedestal. And at the sight he shudders, and with a holy awe falls backward to the ground, and falling cannot help pulling back the reins so violently that he brings both the horses on their haunches, the one indeed willingly, because he is not

resisting, but the rebel in spite of struggling. And when they are withdrawn to some distance, the former in his shame and ravishment drenches all the soul with sweat, but the other when he is recovered from the pain which the bit and the fall inflicted, and has with difficulty regained his breath, breaks out into passionate revilings, vehemently railing at his master and his comrade for their treacherous cowardice in deserting their ranks and agreement. And again he urges them, again refusing, to approach, and barely yields a reluctant consent when they beg to defer the attempt to another time. But soon as the covenanted time is come, though they affect forgetfulness, he reminds them of their engagement, and plunging and neighing and dragging, he again obliges them to approach the beautiful youth to make the same proposals. And when they are near, he stoops his head and gets the bit between his teeth, and drags them on incontinently. But the driver experiences, though still more strongly, the same sensation as at first; backward he falls like racers at the barrier, and with a wrench still more violent than before pulls back the bit from between the teeth of the riotous horse, thereby drenching his jaws and railing tongue with blood; and bruising against the ground his legs and haunches, consigns him to anguish. But as soon as by this treatment oft repeated, the evil horse is recovered from his vice, he follows with humbled steps the guidance of his driver, and at sight of the fair one is consumed with terror. So that then, and not till then, does it happen that the soul of the lover follows his beloved with reverence and awe. And the consequence is, that  
255 the youth being now worshipped with all the worship of a god, by a lover who does not feign the passion, but feels it in his soul, and being himself by nature fondly inclined to his worshipper, even though haply in time past he may have been set against lovers by the remarks of his school-fellows or others on the scandal of allowing their approaches, and is therefore disposed to reject his present wooer, yet now that the latter is thus changed he is led in course of time, by the instinct of his years, and the law of destiny, to admit him to familiarity. For

surely it was never destined for the bad to be friends of the bad, or the good aught but friendly to the good. But when the advances have been accepted and speech and intercourse allowed, the affection of the lover being brought into near connection with the loved one, strikes him with wonder, as it compels him to feel that the friendship shown him by all the rest of his friends and relations put together, is as nothing beside the love of his god-inspired friend. And if he continues long thus to indulge him, and allows him the closest contact both in gymnastic schools and other places of meeting, then it is that the stream of that effluence, to which Zeus when enamoured of Ganymedes gave the name of desire, pours upon the lover in a plenteous flood, and partly sinks within him, partly flows off him when he is full; and just as a wind or a noise rebounds from smooth and hard substances and is carried back again to the place from which it came; so the tide of beauty passes back into the beautiful boy through his eyes, the natural channel into his soul; and when it is come there and has fledged it anew, it waters the outlets of the feathers, and forcing them to shoot up afresh fills the soul of the loved one as well as that of his lover with love. He is in love therefore, but with whom he cannot say; nay, what it is that is come over him he knows not, neither can he tell, but like one who has caught a disease in the eye from the diseased gaze of another, he can assign no reason for the affection, but sees himself in his lover, as in a glass, without knowing who it is that he sees. And when they are together, he enjoys the same respite that his lover does from his anguish; but when they are parted, he yearns for him as he himself is yearned for, since he holds in his bosom love's reflected image, love returned. He calls it, however, and believes it to be not love but friendship, albeit, he feels the same desire as the other does, though in a feebler degree, for the sight, the touch, the kiss, the embrace. And consequently, as might be expected, his conduct thenceforward is as follows. When they are lying side by side, the lover's unbridled horse has much to say to its driver, and claims as the recompense of many labours

256 a short enjoyment; but the vicious horse of the other has nothing to say, but burning and restless clasps the lover and kisses him as he would kiss a dear friend, and when they are folded in each other's embrace, is just of such a temper as not for his part to refuse indulging the lover in any pleasure he might request to enjoy; but his yoke-fellow, on the other hand, joins the driver in struggling against him with chastity and reason. Should it appear then that the better part of their nature has led both the lover and loved into a life of order and philosophy, and established its own ascendancy, in bliss and harmony they live out their existence here, being masters of themselves and decorous before the world, having enslaved that portion of the soul wherein vice is contained, and liberated that where virtue dwells; and at last when they come to die, being winged and lightened, they have in one of their three truly Olympic combats achieved the prize, than which no greater good can either human prudence or godly madness bestow on man. But if they have given in to a coarser habit of life, and one unfriendly to wisdom, though not to honour, it may well happen that in a moment of drunkenness or like abandonment, those two unruly beasts will surprise the souls off their guard, and bringing them together into one place will choose and consummate that practice which the world deems happy, and once consummated will for the future indulge in it, though sparingly, as doing what is not approved by all their mind. Dear, therefore, to each other, though not so dear as the former two, do these continue both while their love is burning and when it is extinct; for they conceive themselves to have given and received the strongest pledges, which it were impious at any time to violate by becoming alienated. And in the end, without their wings it is true, but not without having started feathers, they go forth from the body, so that they carry off no paltry prize for their impassioned madness; for there is a law that the paths of darkness beneath the earth shall never again be trodden by those who have so much as set their foot on the heavenward road, but that walking hand in hand they shall live a bright and

blessed life, and when they recover their wings, recover them together for their love's sake.

So great and so godly, my beautiful boy, are the blessings which the affection of a lover will bestow. But the commerce of one who does not love, being alloyed with mortal prudence, and dispensing only mortal and niggardly gifts, will breed in the soul of the loved one a sordidness which the vulgar laud as virtue, and doom it for nine thousand years to be tossed about 257 the earth and under the earth without reason.

Here, to thee, beloved Eros, fair and good as I can make it, I offer and duly pay a recantation, composed perforce for sake of Phædrus, both in phrase and other points, in a poetic strain. But oh vouchsafe me pardon for my former speech and indulgence for this, and of thy tender mercy neither take from me the art of love, which thou hast given me, nor cripple it in thy wrath, but grant that still more than ever I may find favour in the eyes of the fair. And, if in our former speech, Phædrus and I said aught offensive to thee, set it to the account of Lysias as the father of the speech, and make him to cease from speeches of this sort, and turn him to philosophy, even as his brother Polemarchus is turned, in order that his lover also here before thee may no longer halt, as now, between two opinions, but heart and soul devote his life to love with philosophic talk.

*Phæd.* I join with you, Socrates, in praying that, if this lot be better for us, so it may befall us. With regard to the speech, however, it has been long exciting my admiration, so much more beautiful have you made it than your former one; so much more indeed that I am afraid I shall find Lysias making but a poor figure if indeed he be willing to match it with another of his own. Which I have my doubts about. For it was only the other day that one of our public men in an attack he was making upon him, reproached him on this very score, and throughout his attack kept calling him a speech-writer. So that perhaps he may be led by a care for his own reputation, to desist from the practice.

*Socrates.* Your notion is an absurd one, my young gentleman, and you are greatly mistaken in your

favourite, if you imagine him to be a person so readily scared. Perhaps you too believe that his assailant meant what he said.

*Phæd.* He certainly seemed to do so, Socrates; and besides, you must know as well as I do, that men of the greatest influence and consideration in a state are ashamed of writing speeches, and leaving behind them compositions of their own, for fear of obtaining with posterity the reputation and name of sophists.

*Socrates.* It has escaped you, Phædrus, that the phrase "A charming bend," is derived from that long and wearisome bend in the Nile; and so it escapes you that under this affected dislike, our most self-satisfied statesmen are especially fond of composing speeches, and leaving behind them writings; so much so indeed, that whenever they write a speech, they conceive such an affection for its supporters, that they write down in an additional clause at its head the names of those who on each occasion accord it their approval.

*Phæd.* How do you mean? I don't understand you.

258 *Socrates.* Don't you understand that at the beginning of a statesman's writing the name of its supporter is written first?

*Phæd.* How so?

*Socrates.* "Approved." Thus, if I am not mistaken, runs the writing: "Approved by the council, or people, or both." And the proposer, our speech-writer to wit, naming his worthy self with all pomp and panegyric, proceeds to make a speech, and to show off his wisdom to his supporters, not unfrequently by the composition of a very long writing. Or, do you conceive such a production as this to be something different from a written speech?

*Phæd.* No, I certainly don't.

*Socrates.* Well, if the speech stands, our poet goes home from his theatre rejoicing; but if it be erased, and he debarred from speech-writing, and the dignity of authorship, he goes into mourning, himself and his friends.

*Phæd.* So they do.



*Socrates.* Obviously not as disdaining the practice, but as viewing it with admiration.

*Phæd.* Precisely.

*Socrates.* Again, whenever an orator or a monarch has been found equal to the task of assuming the authority of a Lycurgus, or a Solon, or a Darius, and becoming a speech-writer for immortality in a state, does not both he himself, during his life-time, look upon himself in the light of a god, and do not after ages conceive the same opinion of him, from a survey of his written works?

*Phæd.* To be sure they do.

*Socrates.* Do you believe then that a person of this sort, however strong his antipathy to Lysias, would attack him simply on the score of being a writer?

*Phæd.* It is not at any rate to be expected that he would from what you say; for in so doing he would to all appearance be attacking his own particular fancy.

*Socrates.* It must then, I think, be universally acknowledged, that there is no disgrace in the mere fact of writing speeches.

*Phæd.* How can there be?

*Socrates.* But the disgrace, I imagine, commences when they are composed not well, but awkwardly and ill.

*Phæd.* Obviously.

*Socrates.* What then is the character of good and bad writing? Ought we, think you, Phædrus, to take on this matter the evidence of Lysias, and of every one else who has either written or means to write a work, political or otherwise, either in metre as a poet, or without metre as a prose-writer?

*Phæd.* Do you ask if we ought? Why what other object can a man be said to live for, than the enjoyment of such pleasures as these? Surely not for those which must be preceded by pain, before they can be so much as enjoyed, which is the case you know with most of our bodily pleasures, so that they have been justly denominated servile.

*Socrates.* Well, we have time it seems to spare; and

moreover I cannot help fancying that the cicadas, while chirping and talking together over our heads, as is their wont in the heat of the day, have their eyes upon you and me. Should they see us then, like common men, 259 falling asleep instead of conversing in the middle of the day, and abandoning ourselves in laziness of soul to their lulling music, they would regard us with merited scorn, and fancy themselves looking upon some poor slaves, who had sought the refuge of their retreat, to take like sheep a mid-day nap by the waters of their well. But if they see us proceeding with our conversation, and sailing past them unenchanted by their siren strains, they may perhaps in their admiration confer on us that boon, which they have from the gods to bestow upon men.

*Phæd.* What boon is that? I do not remember to have heard of it.

*Socrates.* A lover of the Muses is the last person who should be ignorant of such matters as this. The story goes, that once upon a time these cicadas were men, of a race that lived before the birth of the Muses. But when the Muses were born, and song appeared, it came to pass that some of that race were so transported with pleasure, that as they sang they forgot to eat and drink, till death came upon them unawares. From them it is that the race of the cicadas are sprung, having received the boon from the Muses, that they should need no nourishment after they were come into the world, but spend their time in singing, without food or drink, from the moment of their birth to the day of their death, when they are to repair to the Muses, and tell each of them of their worshippers here below. Terpsichore they tell of those who have honoured her in the dance, and thus make them dearer to her than before: Erato they tell of her votaries in love, and so to each of the other sisters they make their report according to the character of her proper worship. But to Calliope the eldest, and Urania the second of the nine, they bear tidings of those who pass their lives in philosophic study and observance of their peculiar music, these we know being the Muses who, having heaven for their special

sphere, and words both divine and human, pour forth the gladdest strains. You see therefore, Phædrus, there are many reasons why we should talk and not slumber in the middle of the day.

*Phæd.* Indeed there are.

*Socrates.* Let us then, resuming the subject which we proposed to ourselves for consideration, examine in what consists a good or a bad discourse, whether spoken or written.

*Phæd.* Certainly.

*Socrates.* Is it not an essential condition of a good and fine speech being made, that the mind of the speaker be acquainted with the truth of the matter he is going to discuss?

*Phæd.* Why, I have heard men say on this subject, Socrates, that there is no need at all for the intended 260 orator to learn what is really just, but only what is likely to be considered just by the multitude who are to sit as judges; nor, again, what is really good and honourable, but only what will appear so; for by such appearances, they add, is persuasion effected, and not by truth.

*Socrates.* Sure we must not cast away a saying, Phædrus, which wise men have uttered, but rather examine whether there be anything in it or not. And so we must not refuse a hearing to your present remark.

*Phæd.* Certainly not.

*Socrates.* Let us consider it then in the following point of view. Suppose I were to set about persuading you to buy a horse for the purposes of war, but neither of us knew what a horse was; only this much I did happen to know, that my friend Phædrus believed a horse to be that domestic animal which has the longest ears.

*Phæd.* Why, it would be absurd, Socrates.

*Socrates.* Wait a moment. What if I were to proceed in a tone of serious persuasion, and compose a panegyric on the ass, all the while calling him a horse, and saying that he was a creature of infinite value, not only for domestic purposes, but also on military service, as he was both convenient to fight from, and capable

of bringing up baggage, and of being made useful in a thousand other ways?

*Phæd.* Well, there can be no doubt of its being utterly absurd now, at any rate.

*Socrates.* Is it not better though to be absurd, than a dangerous and malevolent friend?

*Phæd.* Doubtless it is.

*Socrates.* Whenever then an orator, who is ignorant of good and evil, finds a people in a state of similar ignorance, and takes upon himself to persuade them by passing an eulogium, not upon a poor ass as though it were a horse, but upon evil as though it were good; and when, by having studied and learned the popular opinions, he has succeeded in persuading them to do that which is evil instead of that which is good, what kind of fruit do you imagine his oratory will hereafter reap as the harvest of the seed she has sown?

*Phæd.* No very good one, certainly.

*Socrates.* Is it not possible, though, my good Phædrus, that we have been somewhat too rough in our attack on rhetoric? may she not turn upon us and say, What's all this trifling, ye wondrous wise? I force no man to learn speaking without a knowledge of the truth; on the contrary, if my advice be worth anything, he will acquire the truth before he comes to me. But what I do insist on is this, that without my aid he will not be a whit the better able, for all his knowledge of truth, to persuade according to art.

*Phæd.* And do you not admit the justice of her plea?

*Socrates.* I do, provided only the arguments which are coming up to attack her testify to her being an art. For methinks I hear the rustle of certain arguments approaching, and protesting that she is an impostor, and no art at all, but an inartistic knack. But of speaking, says the Spartan, there neither is, nor ever shall be, genuine art without the grasp of truth.

261 *Phæd.* We must have your arguments, Socrates; bring them here into court, and examine what it is they say, and how they say it.

*Socrates.* Hither then, fine creatures, and persuade Phædrus, father of a fair progeny like you, that if he be

not a competent philosopher, neither at any time will he be a competent speaker on any subject at all. And let Phædrus reply.

*Phæd.* Put your questions.

*Socrates.* May not rhetoric in general be considered as a method of winning men's souls by means of words, not only in courts of law, and other public assemblies, but also in private conversation indifferently on matters great and small; and is not its correct use held in equal honour whether the subject to which it is applied be trivial or important? Or what have you heard say on the matter?

*Phæd.* Why nothing at all of this kind, I can assure you. No, the courts of law are the especial sphere of rhetorical art, and it is also employed in addressing deliberative assemblies; but I never heard of its extending further.

*Socrates.* What, have you only heard of the arts of speaking composed by Nestor and Ulysses, to while away their leisure before Troy? and have you never heard of those by Palamedes?

*Phæd.* No, nor of Nestor's either, unless you are making a Nestor of Gorgias, and a Ulysses of Thrasymachus or Theodorus.

*Socrates.* Possibly I am. However, to leave these gentlemen for the present, answer me this. In a court of justice, what is it that the contending parties do? Contradict each other, do they not?

*Phæd.* Precisely.

*Socrates.* On points of right and wrong?

*Phæd.* Yes.

*Socrates.* And if a man does this by rule of art, he will make the same thing appear to the same people to be at one time right, and at another, if he pleases, wrong.

*Phæd.* Of course.

*Socrates.* And so in a popular harangue he will make the public believe the same line of conduct to be at one time for their advantage, and at another time just the reverse.

*Phæd.* Certainly he will.

*Socrates.* But do we not also hear of the Eleatic Palamedes speaking by aid of art in such a manner that his hearers believed the same things to be at once like and unlike, one and many, at rest and in motion?

*Phæd.* Undoubtedly we do.

*Socrates.* It appears, then, that the art of debate is not confined either to courts of law or popular assemblies, but that to everything that is said we are able to apply this single art, if art it is, by which we shall be enabled to make all things appear similar that are capable of so appearing, and to drag to the light all such attempts in others, however dexterously concealed.

*Phæd.* I don't quite understand what you mean by this.

*Socrates.* My meaning will, I think, be apparent, if we conduct our inquiry thus. Is deception more generally practised in things which differ much or little?

162 *Phæd.* In those which differ little.

*Socrates.* And you will get round, I conceive, from one side to the other, with less chance of detection, by taking short steps than long ones.

*Phæd.* Unquestionably.

*Socrates.* If one man, then, would fain deceive another, without being deceived himself, he ought to be able to discriminate accurately the resemblances and differences of things.

*Phæd.* Nay, he *must* be able.

*Socrates.* But if he be ignorant of the true nature of a particular thing, will he be in a condition to distinguish between a greater and less resemblance to it in other things?

*Phæd.* Impossible.

*Socrates.* Whenever, therefore, people are deceived, and form opinions wide of the truth, it is clear that the error has slid into their minds through the medium of certain resemblances to that truth.

*Phæd.* Such no doubt is generally the case.

*Socrates.* Is it possible, then, for a man ever to possess the art of bringing over the mind of another from truth to falsehood, by leading it from link to link in the chain of resemblances, or to escape such delusion

himself, without having first arrived at an understanding of the true nature of each particular thing?

*Phæd.* No, never.

*Socrates.* An art of speaking then, composed by one, who, without a knowledge of the truth, has entrapped men's opinions, will present, I conceive, but a sorry and inartistic appearance.

*Phæd.* I apprehend so.

*Socrates.* Now, Phædrus, what say you to our taking the speech of Lysias, which you have got in your hand, together with those of mine which followed, and looking for instances in them of what we maintain to be in accordance with, or in violation of, art?

*Phæd.* I should like it of all things; since there is a sort of baldness in our present way of treating the subject, arising from a want of proper examples.

*Socrates.* True, and by some lucky chance, as I take it, both the speeches were made to afford an example of the manner in which an author, who is himself acquainted with the truth, may for mere amusement lead his hearers away from it in discourse. And for my part, Phædrus, I set this to the account of the deities of the spot; or it may be that the ministers of the Muses, our songsters overhead, have breathed into us this happy gift. For sure I am that I at least am innocent of any art of speaking.

*Phæd.* Be it as you will—only make your meaning clear.

*Socrates.* Well, then, read me out the beginning of Lysias' speech.

*Phæd.* With the state of my affairs you are acquainted, and how I expect advantage to us both from this arrangement you have heard. Now I claim not to be disappointed in my suit on the ground of my not happening to be your lover. For lovers repent.

*Socrates.* Stop—we are to notice, are we not, any error or violation of art that our author commits?

*Phæd.* We are.

*Socrates.* Well, then, is it not obvious to all the world, that on certain points of this kind we are all agreed, on others all at variance?

*Phæd.* I think I know what you mean; but explain yourself more clearly.

*Socrates.* When a man uses the words iron or silver, do we not all understand by them the same things?

*Phæd.* To be sure we do.

*Socrates.* But what happens when he talks of justice or virtue? Do we not all start off at once in different directions, and quarrel both with one another and ourselves?

*Phæd.* Too true.

*Socrates.* On some things, then, you allow we are agreed, in others not?

*Phæd.* Just so.

*Socrates.* Now in which of these two classes of things is deception more easily practised; and in which has rhetoric greater power?

*Phæd.* Clearly in that in which we are liable to go wrong.

*Socrates.* Before handling, then, an art of rhetoric, a man ought in the first instance to have methodically distinguished between these two classes, and discovered some characteristic mark of each, of that in which men in general are of necessity in error, and of that where no such necessity exists.

*Phæd.* A fine generalization certainly, Socrates, would he have devised who had seized on this distinction.

*Socrates.* And secondly, I imagine, when he comes to any particular case, he must not be at fault, but perceive with rapidity in which of the two classes the subject of his intended remarks is contained.

*Phæd.* Exactly.

*Socrates.* Now what do you say to Love? Are we to rank him in the debateable, or certain class?

*Phæd.* In the debateable, without a doubt. For how else, think you, could I have allowed you to say all that you have just now said about him, making him out at one time to be a curse both to the lover and his favourite; and then again their chiefest blessing?

*Socrates.* Admirably said: but tell me this too—for I, you must know, was in such an ecstatic state, that



I do not quite remember—did I give a definition of Love at the beginning of my speech?

*Phæd.* Aye, that you did, and a wonderfully thorough one too.

*Socrates.* Alas for Lysias, son of Cephalus! How far less skilled do you make him in the art of speech-writing than the nymphs of our river and Pan the son of Hermes; or am I altogether wrong, and did Lysias also, at the commencement of his love-speech, compel us to form some one definite conception of love—the conception that he himself preferred—and then proceed, in strict accordance with this conception, to arrange all the subsequent parts of his discourse till he brought it to a fitting conclusion? Just let us read the opening sentence again.

*Phæd.* I will if you wish it, though what you are looking for is not there.

*Socrates.* Let us hear it, that we may take his own evidence on the point.

*Phæd.* "With the state of my affairs you are acquainted, and how I expect advantage to us both from this arrangement, you have heard. Now I claim not to be disappointed in my suit on the ground of my 264 not belonging to the number of your lovers; for they, indeed, repent of the benefits they have conferred as soon as they are released from their passion."

*Socrates.* Yes, we seem to be far indeed from discovering here what we are looking for, when we find our author not even starting from the beginning, but from the end of his subject, and essaying to get through his discourse like a swimmer on his back—the wrong way foremost; for you see he commences with what the lover might be supposed to say to his favourite at the end, and not before the end, of his address. Or do you see nothing in my objection, Phædrus, noble friend?

*Phæd.* Yes, I must confess, Socrates, that what he is talking about is a natural conclusion of the subject.

*Socrates.* And what do you say to the rest? Do not the several parts of his discourse appear to have been thrown together at random? or do you see some neces-

sity for the second sentence occupying the second place, or any other sentence appearing in the position he has assigned it? For my part, I must confess that he seems to me, in my ignorance, to have put down on paper, with a gentlemanly independence, whatever came first into his head; but you, perhaps, are aware of some law of composition which guided his sentences into that particular order.

*Phæd.* You are too good to suppose me capable of seeing through the design of a Lysias with so critical an eye.

*Socrates.* But this I think you will allow, that every speech ought to be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own, lacking neither head nor foot, but having both a middle and extremities in perfect keeping with one another and the whole.

*Phæd.* Undoubtedly.

*Socrates.* Examine, then, whether your friend's speech be composed on this principle or not, and you will find it just like the epigram which people say is inscribed on the tomb of Midas, the Phrygian.

*Phæd.* What is the epigram, and what is there peculiar about it?

*Socrates.* It runs thus :

I am a maiden of brass, and I lie upon Midas's tomb :  
Ever while water shall flow, and the trees of the forest shall bloom  
Here will I stay on a grave that is watered with many a tear,  
Telling to all who pass by me that Midas is sepulchred here.

Now, that it is utterly immaterial whether any line of this epigram be put first or last, you must, I should think, have observed.

*Phæd.* You make very merry with our speech, *Socrates.*

*Socrates.* Well, *Phædrus*, to spare your feelings, suppose we pass it by; not but that I conceive it to contain a crowd of examples, which a man might study with advantage to himself, provided only he does not at all attempt to imitate them; and let us proceed to the other two speeches, for there was something in them, I imagine, well worthy the attention of those  
265 who wish to consider the subject of speaking.

*Phæd.* What sort of thing do you mean?

*Socrates.* If I remember right, they were opposed to each other; the one supporting the claims of the impassioned; and the other, those of the unimpassioned suitor.

*Phæd.* And right manfully they did their work.

*Socrates.* I thought you were going to say, as the truth would warrant, right madly. However, this is the very point I was in quest of. We said that love was a madness, did we not?

*Phæd.* We did.

*Socrates.* And that madness was of two kinds, the one produced by human disease, the other by an inspired departure from established usages.

*Phæd.* Exactly.

*Socrates.* And the inspired we divided into four parts, and distributing them among four heavenly powers, we set down the madness of prophecy to the inspiration of Apollo; of mysteries, to the inspiration of Dionysus; to the Muses again we ascribed the madness of poesy; and the fourth, to Aphrodite and Eros. And this last, the madness of love, we said was the best of all the four; and expressing the affection of love by a strange kind of similitude, wherein we kept, I doubt not, some true principle in our sight, though haply we swerved into error on our path, we compounded a discourse not altogether without plausibility, and sang a mythical hymn in seemly and pious adoration of my lord and thine, Phædrus—of Eros, the patron of beautiful boys.

*Phæd.* And one, I can assure you, which it afforded me no slight pleasure to hear.

*Socrates.* Let us now, by an examination of the speech itself, discover how it was that it found means of passing from censure to praise.

*Phæd.* Well. And how was it?

*Socrates.* You must know that I consider the speech itself, in its general character, to be nothing more than a sportive effusion; but throughout all that was thus casually uttered, there are two forms of method apparent which would well repay our attention, if we

could but obtain a systematic view of their respective efficiency.

*Phæd.* What are they, pray?

*Socrates.* The first consists in comprehending at a glance, whenever a subject is proposed, all the widely scattered particulars connected with it, and bringing them together under one general idea, in order that, by a precise definition, we may make every one understand what it is that at the time we are intending to discuss. And this plan we just now, as you remember, adopted with regard to love: we defined its nature; and whatever be the merit of the performance, certain it is that to that definition my speech owes its clearness and consistency.

*Phæd.* And what is your other method, Socrates?

*Socrates.* That, on the other hand, enables us to separate a general idea into its subordinate elements, by dividing it at the joints, as nature directs, and not attempting to break any limb in half, after the fashion of a bungling carver. And this plan was followed in my two speeches with regard to mental derangement.

266 Just as from one body there proceed two sets of members, called by the same name, but distinguished as right and left, so when my speeches had formed the general conception of mental derangement, as constituting by nature one class within us, the speech which had to divide the left-hand portion desisted not from dividing it into smaller, and again smaller parts, till it found among them a kind of left-handed love, which it railed at with well-deserved severity; while the other led us to the right-hand side of madness, where it discovered a love bearing indeed the same name as the former, but of an opposite and a godly sort, which it held up to be gazed at and lauded as the author of our greatest blessings.

*Phæd.* Perfectly true.

*Socrates.* Now, not only do I pursue myself, with all a lover's assiduity, these methods of decomposing and combining, but if ever I find any one else whom I judge capable of apprehending the one and the many as they are in nature, that man "I follow behind, as though in

the track of a god." And to all who are possessed of this power I have been in the habit of giving, whether rightly or wrongly, heaven knows, the name of dialecticians. But tell me, what is the proper name for the disciples of your school and Lysias's? is yours that identical art of words by the use of which Thrasy machus and his compeers have not only become clever speakers themselves, but make such of all their pupils, who are willing to bring them presents, as though they were kings?

*Phæd.* And men of kingly mould they are, though certainly not acquainted with that about which you are now inquiring. However, you appear to me to be quite right in calling this kind of method dialectical; but the rhetorical, I take it, still eludes our grasp.

*Socrates.* Indeed! a fine thing truly that must be which, not comprised in this, is yet apprehended by art. On no account must it be slighted by you and me—come now, let us consider what it is that is left to rhetoric.

*Phæd.* Oh, you'll find plenty of it, I doubt not, Socrates, if you'll only look in the books written on the art of speech-making.

*Socrates.* True, and I am obliged to you for reminding me. We must have, in the first place, I think, an exordium delivered at the opening of the speech. This is what you mean—is it not? the refinements of the art?

*Phæd.* Yes.

*Socrates.* And next we must have narration, they say, and evidence to back it, and thirdly proofs, and fourthly probabilities; and there's confirmation, if I remember right, and after-confirmation to boot, according to that prime tricker-out of speeches who comes from Byzantium:

*Phæd.* Worthy Theodorus, eh?

*Socrates.* Exactly. He gives us rules too for refutation and after-refutation, both in charge and defence. But the Parian wonder, Evenus, we must not leave in the background, who was the first to discover sub-intimation and bye-panegyric; nay, they tell me he repeats his bye-censures in verse, to aid the memory.

So clever is he. Can we pass over in silence either Tisias and Gorgias, who were enabled to see that the probable ought to be more highly prized than the true; who make small things appear great, and great things small, by force of words; who talk of what is new as though it were old, and of what is old as though it were new; and who have invented for every subject a terse brevity and illimitable prolixity? Once though, when I told Prodicus of this, he burst out a-laughing, and said that none but himself had discovered what kind of speeches were required by art. We must have them, says he, neither long nor short, but of moderate length.

*Phæd.* Cleverly said, Prodicus.

*Socrates.* But we must not forget Hippias; for I fancy our friend from Elis would be on the same side with him of Ceos.

*Phæd.* Doubtless.

*Socrates.* But where shall we find words for all Polus's museum of ornaments—his jingle-making, maxim-making, image-making, and all the pretty expressions which he borrowed from his master Licymnius, to create a harmonious diction?

*Phæd.* Was not this though, Socrates, something in the style of Protagoras?

*Socrates.* A correctness of diction, young sir, was what he taught, and a great many other fine things too. But in the art of dragging in piteous whinings on poverty and age, there never was, I believe, such a master as the hero of Chalcedon. He was a terrible man, too, for rousing the passions of a crowd, and lulling them again when roused, by the magic of his song, as he used to say; and at raising or rebutting a calumny on any ground whatsoever, he was eminently expert. To come, however, to the conclusion of the speech, that is, I imagine, a point on which all men are agreed, though some call it recapitulation, and others by some different title.

*Phæd.* You mean, the summarily reminding the hearers at the end of the speech of all that has been said in the course of it?

*Socrates.* Yes; and now have you anything else to tell me about the art of speaking?

*Phæd.* Only a few trifling matters not worth mentioning.

*Socrates.* Well, if they are trifling, let us pass them 268 by, and rather hold up these we have got to the light, that we may discern the character and sphere of their efficiency in art.

*Phæd.* There is no doubt of its being a very powerful one, *Socrates*; in popular assemblies, at any rate.

*Socrates.* None, I am aware; but look at them, my good sir, and see whether you do not observe, as I do, some flaw in their texture.

*Phæd.* Point it out, will you?

*Socrates.* Well, answer me this. Suppose a man were to call upon your friend Eryximachus, or his father Acumenus, and say, I know how to make such applications to the body as will create either heat or cold, as I please; and if I think proper, I can produce vomitings and purgings, and a great variety of similar effects. And, on the strength of this knowledge, I flatter myself that I am a physician, and able to make a physician of any one to whom I may communicate the knowledge of these matters. What do you think would be their answer on hearing this?

*Phæd.* Why, they would, of course, ask him whether he also knew to what objects, at what times, and to what extent, these modes of treatment ought severally to be applied.

*Socrates.* And if he were to answer, O, 'now nothing of the kind; but I expect that my pupil will be able to act in all these matters for himself, as soon as he has learnt the secrets I mentioned?

*Phæd.* Why then they would doubtless say, The man is mad; he has been hearing some book read, or he has fallen in with some nostrum or other, and fancies himself in consequence a made physician, while in reality he knows nothing at all about the art.

*Socrates.* And what if a man were to go up to Sophocles and Euripides, and tell them that he knew how to make a very long harangue on a small matter,

and again, a very short harangue on a great matter; that he could write at will in a pathetic or in a bold and menacing tone; that he possessed a variety of similar accomplishments, and that by giving lessons in such he conceived himself to be imparting the power of writing tragedy?

*Phæd.* Well, they too, I imagine, Socrates, would burst into a laugh at the notion of tragedy being made up of these elements, without regard being paid to their consistency with one another and the whole in the combination.

*Socrates.* True, but they would not, I conceive, rail at him coarsely, but would rather adopt the tone a musician would use on meeting with a man who esteemed himself a harmonist, because, as he said, he happened to know how to draw from a chord the highest and lowest possible notes. For the musician, I imagine, would not fiercely say to such a person, You wretched fellow, you are stark mad: but, with the gentleness that music inspires, would reply, It is doubtless necessary, my excellent friend, for these matters to be understood by the intended harmonist, but there is nothing in the world to hinder a person who knows all that you know from being altogether ignorant of harmony: for the acquirements which you possess are the necessary preliminaries to harmony, and not harmony itself.

*Phæd.* And a very proper answer, too.

269 *Socrates.* And in like manner, Sophocles might reply to the tragic pretender, that he knew the preliminaries to tragedy, but not tragedy itself; and Acumenus to the medical pretender, that he knew the preliminaries to medicine, but not medicine itself.

*Phæd.* Most assuredly they might.

*Socrates.* And lastly, what answer might we expect from the honied tones of our Athenian Adrastus, or from the great Pericles himself, were they to hear of the splendid devices which we have just now enumerated, of the maxim-makings, image-makings, and all the other makings, of which we concluded the list by remarking, that they deserved to be scrutinized in a



clearer light? Would they follow, do you imagine, our rude example, and be so boorish as to give vent to ill-mannered expressions against those who have written on, and give lessons in these artifices, as though they constituted the art of rhetoric: or would they, as being wiser than we, turn upon us reprovably, and say, Phædrus and Socrates, you do not well to be angry, but should rather make all allowance, if people ignorant of dialectics have been found unable to define what rhetoric is, and, as the natural result of this ignorance, have conceived themselves inventors of an art of rhetoric because they happen to possess the acquirements which must of necessity precede the art; and if, again, they believe that by teaching these acquirements to others they have imparted to them rhetoric in perfection, while they say nothing about the power of using each of them persuasively, or of combining them into one general whole, but leave it, as a trifling matter, to the pupils themselves, to furnish, out of their own unaided resources, in the speeches they may have to compose?

*Phæd.* Well, certainly, Socrates, I am afraid that such is very much the character of the art which these people teach both in lecture and writing; and I must confess I think you have spoken the truth. But do now tell me by what means, and from what source, we may acquire the real art of rhetorical persuasion.

*Socrates.* The power, Phædrus, of becoming a consummate workman therein, is probably, or I should rather say, is of necessity, subject to a universal law. If you are endowed by nature with a genius for speaking, you will be a distinguished speaker, if you add thereto science and practice; but in whichever of these three requisites you are wanting, you will by so much fall short of perfection. However, for all of it that is art, the true method will not, I think, be found on the road whereon Tisias and Thrasyarchus are travelling.

*Phæd.* On what road then?

*Socrates.* Pericles would seem, my good friend, not without reason, to have become the most perfect orator that ever lived.

*Phæd.* How so?

*Socrates.* All the higher arts require, over and above their immediate discipline, a subtle and speculative  
 270 acquaintance with physical science; it being, I imagine, by some such door as this that there enters that elevation of thought and universal mastery over the subject in hand. Now Pericles added these advantages to that of great natural genius. For he fell into the hands, if I mistake not, of Anaxagoras, a teacher of such studies, and being by him stored with abstruse speculation, and led to penetrate into the nature of the intelligent and unintelligent principle—subjects which occupied, you are aware, the main place in his master's discourse—he draughted from those researches into the art of speaking the investigations suitable for it.

*Phæd.* How do you mean?

*Socrates.* The case, I imagine, is the same with the art of rhetoric as it is with that of medicine.

*Phæd.* In what way?

*Socrates.* In both it is necessary to investigate nature; the nature of the body in the one, and of the soul in the other, if you intend to follow a scientific principle, and not a mere empirical routine, in the application of such medicine and diet to the former as will produce in it health and strength, and of such words and rightful culture to the latter as will impart to it the desired persuasion and virtue.

*Phæd.* This seems reasonable at any rate, *Socrates.*

*Socrates.* Now, do you conceive it possible to comprehend satisfactorily the nature of the soul without comprehending the nature of the universe?

*Phæd.* Why, if credit is to be given to Hippocrates, of the line of Æsculapius, the nature of the body even cannot be comprehended without this investigation.

*Socrates.* He says well, *Phædrus.* However, we must not be content with the evidence of Hippocrates, but, interrogating the argument itself, observe if it be consistent.

*Phæd.* True.

*Socrates.* Observe, then, with regard to nature what is maintained by Hippocrates and the truth. Is it not thus that they bid us examine into a thing's nature?

In the first place, we are to inquire whether that is simple or manifold in which we wish to be scientifically proficient ourselves, and able to render others such also : secondly, if it be simple, we are to examine what power it possesses by nature of acting, and of acting upon what, or what susceptibility of being acted upon, and what it is that acts upon it ; if it comprise a number of kinds, we are to enumerate these kinds, and observe with regard to each of them, as in the simple case, its properties, whether active or passive.

*Phæd.* Yes, this seems to be the way, Socrates.

*Socrates.* At any rate, the method which neglected these investigations would be no better than a blind man's walk. But surely we must never compare the scientific follower of any pursuit to a blind or a deaf man. No ; it is evident that whosoever teaches speaking on scientific principles, will accurately explain the essential nature of that to which his pupil will have to address his speeches. And this, if I mistake not, will be the soul.

*Phæd.* Indisputably.

*Socrates.* Against this then all his battle is directed ; 271 for in this it is that he endeavours to effect persuasion. Is it not so ?

*Phæd.* Yes.

*Socrates.* It is obvious, therefore, that Thrasymachus and every one else who seriously communicates an art of rhetoric, will, in the first place, with all accuracy notice and make apparent whether the soul be single and uniform by nature, or, like the body, of many different kinds—this being the process which we maintain to be revealing nature.

*Phæd.* Precisely.

*Socrates.* Secondly, he will explain in what part it is active, and upon what it acts ; in what part passive, and by what it is acted upon.

*Phæd.* To be sure he will.

*Socrates.* And thirdly, when he has ranged in order the different kinds of speech and different kinds of soul, and their different conditions, he will enumerate all causes that act, and suiting kind by kind, will show.

what sort of soul is of necessity persuaded, or not persuaded, by what sort of speech, and for what reason, in either case.

*Phæd.* At any rate, his work would to all appearance be best done by this method.

*Socrates.* Never, I can assure you, my friend, will aught spoken or explained on a different method be spoken or explained on a scientific method, either in this case or any other. But our modern authors, whom you wot of, of arts of rhetoric, are crafty dissemblers, and manage to keep out of view their exquisite insight into the nature of the soul. Till, then, they both speak and write in this manner, let us not accord to them that they speak and write scientifically.

*Phæd.* What manner do you mean by *this*?

*Socrates.* To dictate the exact forms of expression were no easy task; but the general course that a speaker ought to pursue, if he means to perform his work as scientifically as possible, I am prepared to explain.

*Phæd.* Do so.

*Socrates.* It being admitted that the efficacy of speech is to win men's souls, it follows of necessity that the intended speaker must be acquainted with all kinds of soul that exist. Now of these kinds there are a certain number, each being of a certain sort; whence result different characters in different individuals. And this division being established, there are again a certain number of kinds of speeches, each of a certain character. Persons, therefore, of a certain character are by speeches of a certain character easily persuaded for certain reasons into certain things, while persons of a different character are under the same circumstances hard to be persuaded. These distinctions, then, must be competently understood; but even when understood, our speaker must be able to follow them rapidly with his perceptive faculties, as they fall under his notice in the course and operation of daily life, or as yet he knows no more of his art than the mere speeches he used to hear from his master at school. But when he is in a condition to say what sort of man is likely to be persuaded by what sort of speech, and on meeting with

an individual in the world, is able to read his character at a glance, and say to himself, Here is the man, and here the nature, for which I heard those speeches from <sup>272</sup> my master, now actually present before me; him, therefore, I must address with this sort of speech, in this sort of manner, if I mean to persuade him to this sort of thing—when, I say, he is possessed of all this knowledge, and has learnt, moreover, the proper time for speaking, and the proper time for being silent, and has further learnt to distinguish between the seasonable and unseasonable use of the style sententious, the style pathetic, the style indignant, and all your other styles of speaking in which he has been instructed, then, I maintain, and not till then, is his art wrought into a beautiful and a perfect work. But if he omit any of these requisites, whether in writing, or teaching, or speaking, while he professes to be performing his work scientifically, the hearer who refuses to be persuaded achieves a victory over him. But, Phædrus, but, Socrates—we shall doubtless hear from our friend the treatise-writer—is this to be your sole art of speaking, or may we put up with one conducted on somewhat different principles?

*Phæd.* None other, I take it, Socrates, can possibly be allowed, and yet this of yours appears no slight undertaking.

*Socrates.* True, Phædrus, it is not slight. And for this reason we ought to turn over all their writings again and again, to see whether there be found anywhere an easier and a briefer road to the art, in order that we may not uselessly travel on a long and rough one when we might go by one both smooth and short. So if you have ever heard of anything available for our purpose, either from Lysias, or any other teacher, make an effort to remember and tell it me.

*Phæd.* If the effort were sufficient, Socrates, I should be able to do so; as it is, I can remember nothing at the moment.

*Socrates.* What say you then to my repeating a statement which I have heard from certain gentlemen who handle the subject?

*Phæd.* I should like it of all things.

*Socrates.* Well, the saying is, you know, Phædrus, that it's fair to state even the wolf's cause.

*Phæd.* It is, and do you comply with it.

*Socrates.* I will. They tell me there is no need in the world to treat the matter so solemnly, or to carry it back to so remote a source, by such long meanderings. For there is not the slightest occasion—this we also mentioned at the beginning of our argument—for people, intending to be competent speakers, to have anything at all to do with the truth, about actions just or good, or about men who are such either by nature or education. For in courts of justice, they say, no one troubles himself in the least degree with the truth of these matters, but only with what is plausible, that is to say, with what is likely; to this, therefore, you must give all your attention if you mean to speak by rule of art. Nay, there are occasions when you must not even state facts as they have actually happened, if the story be improbable, but only such as are likely, whether in accusation or defence. And, in short, in whatever you say, it is the probable that you must chiefly aim at, and pay no regard at all to the true. For the observance  
273 of this, throughout your speech, will supply you with the entire art.

*Phæd.* Yes, Socrates, this is exactly the language employed by our professed masters in the art of speaking. I remember, that in the early part of our conversation, we did slightly touch upon this sort of principle, and that this is held to be of paramount importance by the gentlemen of the profession.

*Socrates.* Nay, Phædrus, I'm sure you have read over and over again the great Tisias himself. So let Tisias tell us in person whether he means anything else by the probable, than what accords with the opinion of the many.

*Phæd.* What else can I? answers Tisias.

*Socrates.* On the strength then, I suppose, of this sapient and scientific discovery, he proceeds to announce, that if a weak, but courageous man, is brought to trial for having knocked down and robbed

of his clothes, or purse, a strong and cowardly one, neither accuser nor accused is to tell the truth to the judges, but the coward is to say that the other had assistance when he knocked him down; while the brave man must first prove the fact of their being alone, and then appealing to their favourite probable, exclaim, Why, how could a man like myself have ever thought of attacking a man like that? But the other, you may be sure, is not to plead his own cowardice, but rather essay some fresh falsehood, which will, perhaps, supply his adversary with the means of refuting the accusation. And so, whatever be the matter on hand, this, he says, is the style of pleading warranted by art. Is it not so, Phædrus?

*Phæd.* It is.

*Socrates.* Recondite truly is the art, and wonderful the skill of its inventor, be he Tisias, or who he may, and whatever be the name he delights to be called by. But, Phædrus, shall we answer him or not?

*Phæd.* With what?

*Socrates.* With this. Long before you joined our conversation, Tisias, we chanced to observe, that this vaunted probability of yours only made itself felt in the minds of the many, by virtue of its resemblance to the truth. And we have since proved, that in all cases the various shades of resemblance are best detected by the man who is best acquainted with the truth in question. So that, if you have anything else to say on the art of speaking, we shall be delighted to hear it; if not, we will abide by our previous position, that unless a speaker has reckoned up the different natures of his hearers, and is able both to separate things into their several kinds, and embrace particulars under one general idea, he will never reach that highest point of excellence in the art which is attainable by the power of man. But this knowledge he can never possibly acquire without great labour; labour which the wise man ought to bestow, not with a view to speaking and acting before the world, but for the sake of making himself able, both by word and deed to please the gods as best he can. For verily, Tisias, so speak wiser men than you or I,

it behoves not the reasonable man to study pleasing  
 274 fellow-bondsmen, save only if he may in passing, but  
 masters good, and of good descent. If, therefore, our  
 circuit be a long one, marvel not; for it is for the sake  
 of high ends that we have to make it, and not for such  
 as you conceive. Still, even yours, as our argument  
 proves, may be best attained, if you choose to derive  
 them from our source.

*Phæd.* The ends you speak of, Socrates, are very  
 glorious, I know, if a man could but attain to them.

*Socrates.* But surely, my friend, if the ends be  
 glorious, all that befalls us in seeking them is glorious  
 also?

*Phæd.* Indeed it is.

*Socrates.* So far, then, as regards the scientific and  
 unscientific treatment of discourse: let this suffice.

*Phæd.* And well it may.

*Socrates.* But the question of propriety and improp-  
 riety in writing, and how to make a composition grace-  
 ful or inelegant, remains to be considered. Does it not?

*Phæd.* Yes.

*Socrates.* Are you aware, Phædrus, by what conduct  
 or language, with respect to speaking, a man will please  
 God best?

*Phæd.* Not at all;—are you?

*Socrates.* At any rate I can tell you a story of the  
 ancients on the subject. Whether it be true or not,  
 they know themselves; but if haply *we* could find the  
 truth, could we possibly, think you, pay heed any longer  
 to the opinions of men?

*Phæd.* That would be indeed ridiculous; but pray tell  
 me the story you say you have heard.

*Socrates.* Well, I heard that in the neighbourhood of  
 Naucratis, in Egypt, there lived one of the ancient gods  
 of that country; the same to whom that holy bird is  
 consecrated which they call, as you know, Ibis, and  
 whose own name was Theuth. He, they proceed, was  
 the first to invent numbers and arithmetic, and geometry  
 and astronomy; draughts moreover, and dice, and,  
 above all, letters.\* Now the whole of Egypt was at that  
 time under the sway of Thamus, who resided near the



capital city of the upper region, which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes. The god himself they called Ammon. To him, therefore, Theuth repaired; and, displaying his inventions,\* recommended their general diffusion among the Egyptians. The king asked him the use of each, and received his explanations, as he thought them good or bad, with praise or censure. Now on each of the arts Thamus is reported to have said a great deal to Theuth, both in its favour and disfavour. It would take a long story to repeat it all. But when they came to the letters, Theuth began: "This invention, O king, will make the Egyptians wiser, and better able to remember, it being a medicine which I have discovered both for memory and wisdom." The king replied: "Most ingenious Theuth, one man is capable of giving birth to an art, another of estimating the amount of good or harm it will do to those who are intended to use it. And so now you, as being the father of letters, have ascribed to them, in your fondness, exactly the reverse of their real effects. For this invention of yours will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn it, by causing them to neglect their memory, inasmuch as, from their confidence in writing, they will recollect by the external aid of foreign symbols, and not by the internal use of their own faculties. Your discovery, therefore, is a medicine not for memory, but for recollection,—for recalling to, not for keeping in mind. And you are providing for your disciples a show of wisdom without the reality. For, acquiring by your means much information unaided by instruction, they will appear to possess much knowledge, while, in fact, they will, for the most part, know nothing at all; and, moreover, be disagreeable people to deal with, as having become wise in their own conceit, instead of truly wise."

*Phæd.* You possess a facility, Socrates, for making up tales of Egypt, or any other strange country you please.

*Socrates.* We are told, my friend, that the voice of an oak, in the holy ground of Zeus of Dodona, was the first ever gifted with prophecy. The men of those days, not

being clever like you moderns, were content, in their simplicity, to listen to an oak or a stone, if only it spake the truth. But to you, it seems, it makes a difference who the speaker is, and from what country he comes; you do not merely consider whether the fact be, or be not, as he states it.

*Phæd.* Your reproof is just. And I believe the truth, with regard to letters, to be as the Theban pronounces.

*Socrates.* He, therefore, who leaves behind him, and he again who receives an art in writing, with the idea that anything clear or fixed is to proceed from the writing, must be altogether a foolish-minded person, and, in truth, ignorant of Ammon's prediction, as he must suppose that written words can do something more than recall the things of which they treat to the mind of one who knows them already.

*Phæd.* Most true.

*Socrates.* For this, I conceive, Phædrus, is the evil of writing, and herein it closely resembles painting. The creatures of the latter art stand before you as if they were alive, but if you ask them a question, they look very solemn, and say not a word. And so it is with written discourses. You could fancy they speak as though they were possessed of sense, but if you wish to understand something they say, and question them about it, you find them ever repeating but one and the self-same story. Moreover, every discourse, once written, is tossed about from hand to hand, equally among those who understand it, and those for whom it is in nowise fitted; and it does not know to whom it ought, and to whom it ought not, to speak. And when misunderstood and unjustly attacked, it always needs its father to help it; for, unaided, it can neither retaliate, nor defend itself.

*Phæd.* This again is most true.

276 *Socrates.* But, hold! Is there not another kind of discourse,—this one's legitimate brother? Let us see both how it arises, and how far more excellent and efficient than the other it grows.

*Phæd.* What discourse do you mean, and how does it take its rise?

*Socrates.* I mean that which is written with insight in the learner's mind, which is at once able to defend itself, and knows before whom to speak, and before whom to be silent.

*Phæd.* You mean the wise man's discourse, which is possessed both of life and soul, and of which the written one may fairly be called a shadow?

*Socrates.* Most assuredly I do. But come now, answer me this. If a prudent husbandman had seeds which he cared for, and wished to come to fruit, would he seriously sow them in summer-time, in the gardens of Adonis, and delight to behold them growing up finely in eight days? or, if he did this at all, would he not do it as the mere pastime of a holiday; but, with all the aid of his husbandman's art, sow the seeds, on which he set serious store, in their proper soil, and be content to see them in the eighth month arrived at their maturity?

*Phæd.* Yes, of course, Socrates; he would do the one seriously, and the other, as you say, by way of amusement.

*Socrates.* And shall we say that he who has an insight into the just, the beautiful, and the good, shows less wisdom in the treatment of his seeds than the husbandman?

*Phæd.* God forbid.

*Socrates.* He will not then seriously set himself to write them in water, sowing them with ink by means of a pen, with the aid of words that are unable to defend themselves by speaking, and unable adequately to teach the truth?

*Phæd.* Certainly, we may expect he will not.

*Socrates.* Indeed we may. But in the gardens of letters he will sow his seeds, I imagine, and write, when he does write, for mere amusement, treasuring up aids to the memory both for himself, when he comes to the years of forgetfulness, and for all who are following on the same road. And he will please himself with watching his plants in their tender growth. And while others are indulging in other recreations, refreshing themselves it may be with feast and kindred pleasure,

he, if I mistake not, will in place of such amusements be spending his holiday in the pastime I mention.

*Phæd.* And a noble pastime it is, Socrates, by the side of but a poor one, when a man who can make discourses his play diverts himself with telling stories about justice and virtue.

*Socrates.* Yes, my dear Phædrus, it is noble; but far nobler, I imagine, is a man's work on these matters, when finding a congenial soul, he avails himself of the dialectical art to sow and plant therein scientific words, which are competent to defend themselves, and him who planted them, and are not unfruitful, but bear seed in their turn, from which other words springing up in  
277 other minds are capable of preserving this precious seed ever undecaying, and making their possessor ever happy, so far as happiness is possible for man.

*Phæd.* Yes, Socrates, this is indeed far nobler than the other.

*Socrates.* Now then, Phædrus, that this point is settled, we are in a condition, you will observe, to decide on our former questions.

*Phæd.* Which do you mean?

*Socrates.* Those which led us in our desire to solve them to the point where we are at present arrived; one being to examine the deservedness of the reproach cast on Lysias for writing speeches; the other, to discover, with regard to speeches themselves, what were written according to, and what without, rule of art. Now this distinction appears to me to have been marked with sufficient clearness.

*Phæd.* And so it did to me; but I should be glad to be reminded of it again.

*Socrates.* Before a speaker is acquainted with the true nature of each subject on which he speaks or writes, and is become able to give it a general definition, and then again knows how to divide it into kinds till he reaches the indivisible; before he has investigated in like manner the nature of the soul, and finding the kind of discourse suitable for each kind of soul, orders and embellishes his discourse accordingly; offering to complex souls discourses of complex structure and rich in

every harmony; but simple discourses to simple souls: before, I say, he is able to understand and do all this, he cannot possibly handle discourse with the art of which it admits, whether his object be to instruct or persuade, as the whole of our previous argument has tended to prove.

*Phæd.* Yes, this is pretty nearly just as I thought it was.

*Socrates.* But what are we to say with respect to the honour or disgrace of writing and speaking, and the conditions under which they may justly incur or avoid reproach? Have not our late arguments sufficed to show?

*Phæd.* What?

*Socrates.* That if Lysias or any one else has ever written, or means to write, either a private book, or a public document in the shape of a law, with the idea that his writing contains a great certainty and clearness; in this case reproach attaches to the writer, whether people say so or not. For a total blindness with regard to justice and injustice, to virtue and vice, escapes not in sooth the charge of being truly disgraceful, even though it has been lauded by all the world.

*Phæd.* No; indeed it does not.

*Socrates.* But whoever believes that in a written discourse, whatever be the subject, there must of necessity be much that is sportive; and that no discourse worthy of serious attention has ever, either in verse or prose, been written or spoken—if spoken in the way that our declamations are recited, by rote, without examination or instruction, merely to persuade—but that the very best of them are nothing else than reminders to knowledge; whoever believes this, and believes on the other hand, that in discourses, and only in discourses taught, and for the sake of instruction spoken and really written in the soul of the hearer, about things just and beautiful and good, there is found what is clear and perfect, and worthy of attention; and that such discourses ought to be accounted his own legitimate offspring; first, the one in his own mind, if it be there by his own discovery; then those which children or brothers of the former

have either after or at the same time sprung up worthily in the minds of others: whoever, I say, thinks this of these discourses, and cares for none beside, will go near, Phædrus, to be such a man as you and I would pray we might both become.

*Phæd.* Yes, Socrates, with all my heart I wish and pray for such a lot.

*Socrates.* Be we then content to have amused ourselves thus far with the subject of speaking; and go you now, Phædrus, and tell Lysias, that you and I went down together to the spring and favoured haunt of the nymphs, where we heard words which bade us tell Lysias and all writers of speeches; Homer, and all makers of poetry, without music or with; Solon, and all framers of political writings under the name of laws; that if they composed their works with a knowledge of the truth, and with ability to defend them if brought to account, and with the power, moreover, of making by the words of their mouth the writings of their pen appear but poor, they ought not to be named from these holiday productions, but from those which formed their earnest work.

*Phæd.* What are the names then that you accord them?

*Socrates.* To call them wise, Phædrus, seems to me indeed to be a great matter, and beseeeming God alone. Lovers of wisdom (philosophers), or some name of this kind, would both suit them better and be in better taste.

*Phæd.* And nothing at all out of the way either.

*Socrates.* But the man, on the other hand, who has nothing more precious to show than what he long tortured his brain to write or compose, with elaborate patching and careful retrenching, that man, I conceive, you may justly denominate either poet, or speech-writer, or writer of laws.

*Phæd.* Justly indeed.

*Socrates.* Go then, tell this to your friend.

*Phæd.* But you, Socrates, what will you do? We must not pass over your friend either.

*Socrates.* Whom do you mean?

*Phæd.* Isocrates the fair. What message will you take him, Socrates? What shall we say that he is?

*Socrates.* Isocrates is still young, Phædrus; what I augur of him, however, I am willing to tell you.

*Phæd.* What is that, pray?

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*Socrates.* I think better of his genius than to compare it with the speech-writing of Lysias. Moreover, I account him endued with a nobler nature. So that there will be nothing surprising if, as he advances in years, he will in the art of speaking even, to which he is now applying himself, leave all who have hitherto handled it, far as children behind him; and nothing surprising either if he be not content with such achievements, but be led by a godlier impulse to holier and higher things. For nature, my friend, has implanted a love of wisdom in the mind of the man. This then is the message I will take from the gods of the spot to Isocrates as my favourite, and do you take the one I gave you to Lysias, as yours.

*Phæd.* It shall be done—but let us depart, the rather as the heat of the day is over.

*Socrates.* Were it not better to offer up a prayer to these gods before we go?

*Phæd.* Oh yes.

*Socrates.* Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who here abide, grant me to be beautiful in the inner man, and all I have of outer things to be at peace with those within. May I count the wise man only rich. And may my store of gold be such as none but the good can bear.

Phædrus, need we anything more? For myself I have prayed enough.

*Phæd.* For me too pray the same. Friends share and share alike.

*Socrates.* Let us go.





# EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY

By ERNEST RHYS

*'A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit.'*

MILTON

VICTOR HUGO said a Library was 'an act of faith,' and another writer spoke of one so beautiful, so perfect, so harmonious in all its parts, that he who made it was smitten with a passion. In that faith Everyman's Library was planned out originally on a large scale; and the idea was to make it conform as far as possible to a perfect scheme. However, perfection is a thing to be aimed at and not to be achieved in this difficult world; and since the first volumes appeared there have been many interruptions, chief among them the Great War of 1914-18, during which even the City of Books felt a world commotion. But the series is now back in its old stride and looking forward to complete its scheme of a Thousand Volumes.

One of the practical expedients in the original plan was to divide the volumes into separate sections, as Biography, Fiction, History, Belles-lettres, Poetry, Philosophy, Romance, and so forth; with a shelf for Young People. Last, and not least, there was one of Reference Books, in which, beside the dictionaries and encyclopaedias to be expected, there was a special set of literary and historical atlases, which have been revised from time to time, so as to chart the New Europe and the New World at large, which we hope will preserve Kant's

'Perpetual Peace' under the auspices of the League of Nations at Geneva.

That is only one small item, however, in a library list which is running on to the final volumes of its Thousand. The largest slice of this huge provision is, as a matter of course, given to the tyrannous demands of fiction. But in carrying out the scheme, publishers and editors contrived to keep in mind that books, like men and women, have their elective affinities. The present volume, for instance, will be found to have its companion books, both in the same section and just as significantly in other sections. With that idea too, novels like Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *Fortunes of Nigel*, Lytton's *Harold*, and Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, have been used as pioneers of history and treated as a sort of holiday history books. For in our day history is tending to grow more documentary and less literary; and 'the historian who is a stylist,' as one of our contributors, the late Thomas Seccombe, said, 'will soon be regarded as a kind of Phoenix.'

As for history, Everyman's Library has been eclectic enough to choose its historians from every school in turn, including Gibbon, Grote, Finlay, Macaulay, Motley, and Prescott, while among earlier books may be noted the Venerable Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. On the classic shelf too, there is a Livy in an admirable translation by Canon Roberts, and Caesar, Tacitus, Thucydides, and Herodotus are not forgotten.

'You only, O Books,' said Richard de Bury, 'are liberal and independent; you give to all who ask.' The variety of authors old and new, the wisdom and the wit at the disposal of Everyman in his own Library, may well, at times, seem to him a little embarrassing. In the Essays, for instance, he may turn to Dick Steele in *The Spectator* and learn how Cleomira dances, when the elegance of her motion is unimaginable and 'her eyes are chastised with the simplicity and innocence of her thoughts.'

Or he may take *A Century of Essays*, as a key to the whole roomful of the English Essayists, from Bacon to Addison, Elia to Augustine Birrell. These are the golden gossips of literature, the writers who have learnt the delightful art of talking on paper. Or again, the reader who has the right spirit and looks on all literature as a great adventure may dive back into the classics, and in Plato's *Phædrus* read how every soul is divided into three parts (like Caesar's Gaul). The poets next, and we may turn to the finest critic of Victorian times, Matthew Arnold, as their showman, and find in his essay on Maurice de Guérin a clue to the 'magical power of poetry,' as in Shakespeare, with his

daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty.

William Hazlitt's 'Table Talk' may help again to show the relationship of one author to another, which is another form of the Friendship of Books. His incomparable essay, 'On Going a Journey,' forms a capital prelude to Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria'; and so throughout the long labyrinth of the Library shelves one can follow the magic clue in prose or verse that leads to the hidden treasury. In that way every reader becomes his own critic and Doctor of Letters. In the same way one may turn to the Byron review in Macaulay's *Essays* as a prelude to the three volumes of Byron's own poems, remembering that the poet whom Europe loved more than England did was, as Macaulay said, 'the beginning, the middle and the end of all his own poetry.' This brings us to the provoking reflection that it is the obvious authors and the books most easy to reprint which have been the signal successes out of the many hundreds in the series, for Everyman is distinctly proverbial in his tastes. He likes best of all an old author who has worn well

or a comparatively new author who has gained something like newspaper notoriety. In attempting to lead him on from the good books that are known to those that are less known, the publishers may have at times been even too adventurous. But the elect reader is or ought to be a party to this conspiracy of books and bookmen. He can make it possible, by his help and his co-operative zest, to add still more authors, old and new. 'Infinite riches in a little room,' as the saying is, will be the reward of every citizen who helps year by year to build the City of Books. It was with that belief in its possibilities that the old Chief (J. M. Dent) threw himself into the enterprise. With the zeal of a true book-lover, he thought that books might be alive and productive as dragons' teeth, which, being 'sown up and down the land, might chance to spring up armed men.' That is a great idea, and it means a fighting campaign in which every recruit, every new reader who buys a volume, counts.